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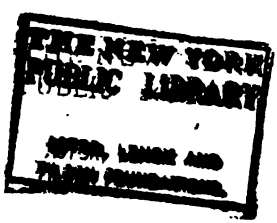
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SIR MATTHEW HALE.

Published Jan.ʸ 21.ˢᵗ 1810, by Taylor & Hessey, Fleet Street.

THE

COUNSELS OF A FATHER,

IN

FOUR LETTERS

OF

SIR MATTHEW HALE TO HIS CHILDREN.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

The practical Life of a true Christian,

IN THE ACCOUNT OF

THE GOOD STEWARD AT THE GREAT AUDIT.

BY SIR MATTHEW HALE.

WITH A NEW MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR'S LIFE.

"I am now on the shady side of threescore years: I write to you what you have often heard me in substance speak."——*First Letter.*

THIRD EDITION.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

SIR MATTHEW HALE was twice married; first to Anne More, the sister of Sir Henry More, of Fanley, Berks, Knight; and, secondly, to Anne, daughter of —— Bishop, Esq. of the same place. By the former he had six children: Robert, Matthew, Thomas, Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth. They were all living in 1662, the date affixed to one of these letters; and the eldest, Robert, was at that time in his 23d year. It is to this son he alludes in the above-mentioned letter, when he says, "Let the original be laid up safely for your brother R." These letters of Sir Matthew Hale were written when he was on the circuit:—thus the duties of the parent were fulfilled, without interfering with those of the judge.

Of these children, Robert died in 1670, Matthew in 1675, and Thomas in May, 1676, half a year before his father. These were sad blows to a sinking man, whose children appear to have been most dear to him. But he had other cares to occupy his latter days, and other claims upon him as a parent. His son Robert had married Frances, daughter of Sir Francis Chokke, of Avington, Berkshire, Knight. But she dying at nearly the same time with her husband, the charge of their five orphan children, all of them infants, devolved upon Sir Matthew and his second wife. Thus he had another young family to protect and educate in his old age. With these he pursued the same system which he had adopted towards his own children; writing to them a long letter of sound advice, which was become the more necessary, as in the common course of events he could not hope much longer to superintend their conduct. It is preserved among his MSS. in Lincoln's Inn library, and is entitled, " A Letter of Advice to my Grand-

children; especially to my two Sons, Matthew and Gabriel Hale, and to my three Daughters, Anne, Mary, and Frances Hale, all Children of my eldest Son Robert Hale, and Frances his Wife, both deceased*." These all survived their grandfather. The three girls died at the ages of 16, 17, and 18 years.

The Four Letters of Sir Matthew Hale to his own Children are now, for the first time, presented to the public in a handsome volume, and with the text comparatively free from errors. For subject and style, and it is hoped for accuracy and elegance, the work deserves to be considered as a standard English classic, fit for the instruction of youth, and the edification of all men.

The Account of the Good Steward being the work of the same hand, is added to the Letters, with the view of rendering them more complete. It is pleasing to see all

* This Letter is now published uniformly with the present volume.

those precepts which are enforced in the former part of the volume, embodied, and reduced to practice in this latter treatise, which, as it contains a summary of the whole faith and duty of a Christian, has been adjudged by many to be little more than a portrait of its estimable author.

The materials for the Memoir prefixed to this edition, were drawn chiefly from the excellent Life of Sir Matthew Hale, by Bishop Burnet, and from the Appendix to that account, written by Mr. Richard Baxter. The length and minute detail of both those articles, prevented the Editor from reprinting them, as he wished, in their original form.

THE LIFE

OF

SIR MATTHEW HALE.

A LIFE of extraordinary incidents, and continual action, forms the most interesting subject of biography; but the most useful example is often met with in very different situations. Of this we have an instance in the Memoirs of Sir Matthew Hale, which exhibit few circumstances of striking occurrence; but as they give a portrait of one who faithfully discharged all the duties of his station, who lived in the practice of every virtue, and whose conduct is of universal application as a rule of life for others, scarcely any have a better claim to the reader's attention.

He was born on the first of November, 1609, at Alderley, in Gloucestershire. His father had practised as a barrister; but from a tenderness of conscience, which, even if unfounded, can never be too highly respected, he retired from the profession of the law: he could not reconcile himself to the custom of setting up false pleas, which, as he thought, was to tell a lie; and in the *legal* character, as it seemed to him, there were many other things required, which were incompatible with the duties of a Christian.

Matthew Hale lost his mother when he was only three years old, and his excellent father died in two years after. But some kind relations took charge of the orphan; and if a good education were the only advantage he could have derived from the longer life of his parents, the care of these new friends to have him properly instructed, left him no room to regret his loss. But there is an influence in the person of every father, which neither he can forfeit, nor his child

can disregard. The infant naturally imbibes a love and respect for that being, under whose protection he feels safe; in whose wisdom he places his reliance; whose smiles are his reward; and whose displeasure is the only thing he dreads. So far from being able to make comparisons, to approve what is right, and to shun what is otherwise, the child has a sacred feeling towards his father, which prevents him from conceiving even a thought to his disparagement. In his estimation he is not so much the best, as the only perfect being in the world. Fathers should consider this, and for the sake of their offspring should preserve appearances at least; for it is a melancholy day for both, when the veil is rent, and the conviction flashes on the mind of the child, that the conduct of a parent must be no longer his example.

Had his father lived, Matthew Hale would have had, in addition to a good education, the advantage of an admirable model for

imitation. To the want of this, it was possibly owing that he contracted some dissolute habits. When he quitted the university, he took too much pleasure, and spent too much time,

"In feats of strength, dexterity, and speed."

He was addicted to company, loved fine clothes, and frequented the theatres to such a degree, that his mind was not only unsettled, but in danger of being quite corrupted. Of this he was soon after sensible; and so strong was his impression of the danger he had escaped, that he resolved he would never see another play. It is not the mere circumstance of being present at these entertainments which constitutes the wrong. They who attend but seldom, may perhaps be amused without injury to their morals; but when men grow fond of such exhibitions, or feel the diversions of a theatre begin to take hold of their minds, then the indulgence is pernicious, and they should avoid it altogether.

There is a redeeming spirit about some men, more than others, which will not long allow them to be guilty of misconduct. That tenderness of conscience, for which the father was distinguished, was possessed by the son; and to its predominating influence may be ascribed all that is valuable in his character, or advantageous in the events of his life. Travelling one Sunday from the West of England, he met with many accidents: one horse fell lame, and another died. These might have happened on another day, but occurring when they did, they gave rise to many serious reflections, the result of which was, his firm determination never again to abuse the Sabbath, but to honour and observe it in the way that God had commanded; and in this determination he so steadily persisted, that, for thirty-six years together, he never failed attending divine service on that day.

To a mind so susceptible of admonition, and desirous of improvement, opportunities

are never wanting. Events, as trifling as the falling of an apple from a tree, will lead a thinking person to great moral, as well as scientific discoveries; and happy are they who have a wise and understanding heart, to profit by the first hint that offers. But the most awful lessons are too frequently neglected. In company with some students, Mr. Hale was one day dining and making merry, when, from excessive drinking, a young man of the party fell down to all appearance dead. All those who were present were much terrified: some of them, it is to be hoped, felt lasting good effects from the impression which that moment made upon their hearts. Mr. Hale was deeply affected: he went into another room, and on his knees most fervently besought God to restore his friend, and to pardon the intemperance of which they had been guilty. For himself, he vowed that he would never keep company in that free manner again, nor drink even a health for the future. His friend was restored to life, and Mr. Hale, as long as

he lived, religiously kept his vow. In extreme distress, when all our hopes are fixed on the special interposition of Heaven, we are very ready to promise extraordinary goodness on our own part; as if that were a condition which it became us to propose, or depended on us to fulfil: but our inability to do any thing that is right without divine assistance, the worthlessness of our best actions in the sight of God, and the consciousness that we have no merits of our own, let us live ever so virtuously, should make us humble, patient, and apprehensive, full of supplication, with fear and trembling, and too well aware of our own nature to place any confidence in our own strength. Prayers are a much better preservative than vows. These, however, are frequently made by persons in Mr. Hale's situation, who have not the grace to keep them with the same fidelity. In all such cases, it would be much better silently to resolve, and yet as steadily to execute; and to avoid imposing any more restraints on ourselves than are absolutely

necessary to some good end. Mr. Hale was placed in disagreeable and even dangerous situations, from his vow to drink no healths. It caused his loyalty to be suspected, during the civil wars in the reign of Charles the First; and, but for uncommon prudence, it might have cost him his life. Dilemmas like these it is better to avoid, when the object for which they are encountered is no more than an innocent custom; and that Mr. Hale himself thought so afterwards, may be inferred from his modest unwillingness to give pledges to the world, even for the maintenance of his religious practices.

Reclaimed from the error of his youth, by the reflections which these accidents produced, and encouraged by the advice of the learned counsellor Serjeant Glanvil, Mr. Hale commenced that vigorous course of study in the profession of the law, which laid the foundation for his future greatness. He was in his twenty-first year when he was admitted into Lincoln's Inn. His constitu-

tion was naturally a good one; and he could endure severe application for a longer time than most men; but it is almost incredible what fatigue he underwent in the prosecution of his undertaking. For many years he devoted sixteen hours a day to reading. He always rose early in the morning, and would never allow himself to be idle during the day. He held no correspondence or conversation upon trifling subjects, conceiving Time to be God's gift, who did not bestow upon us more than was strictly necessary. And certainly we should think that miller a foolish man, who stopt his mill to talk about news, while all the water was running to waste: yet we are guilty of this absurdity every day; and what is worse, we draw from a reservoir which can never be replenished.

By means of unwearied diligence, Mr. Hale attained to such a depth and variety of knowledge as is seldom equalled. Law and divinity formed the principal subjects of his studies: when he was tired of these, he had

recourse to experimental philosophy and the mathematics, which to him were diversions. His readiness in arithmetic was very uncommon. He was profoundly skilled in chronology, and well acquainted with the writings of the Greek philosophers. In physic, anatomy, and surgery, he possessed as much knowledge as could be obtained without actual practice; and as a reason for such acquisitions, he used to say, that "no man could be absolutely a master in any profession, without having some skill in other sciences."

But, next to the study of the law, divinity engaged his chief attention. In this pursuit, not only his mind but his heart was occupied. He delighted in that most profitable part of it, contemplation—"to commune with his own heart, and in his chamber, and be still;" and at these times he would endeavour to conceive such exalted ideas concerning God, as might purify his thoughts, and invest his soul with a holy calmness, not

liable to be invaded by the cares of the world. The choicest of these speculations are bequeathed to us in his Contemplations, Moral and Divine, 2 vols. 8vo., and in several MSS. deposited in the library of Lincoln's Inn, which as yet remain unpublished.

His manner of study was liberal, and adapted to the character of the man. He loved to be abroad very early in the morning, not so much for the health and exercise of his body, as of his mind. With the works of the Almighty before his eyes, and an inclination to make the most of the sentiments they suggested, he emancipated his understanding from the chains of prejudice and passion; he got above that short-sighted view of things which the narrow policy of this world is apt to engender; and having impartially brought his judgment to a balance, he then began to weigh the subject which he intended to investigate. In all his inquiries he went as nearly as possible to the fountain-head; not contenting himself with current opinions in the place of truth, but examining

all with a jealous eye, and striving to trace them, in every instance, to those immutable first principles whence only they derive authority. When all this was done, and his nquiries fell short of certainty, he did not draw positive conclusions from what he had learnt, but left his mind open to further light, from whatever quarter it might come. As far as he had gone, he cast up the amount of evidence, and saw the state of the question; but he never closed the account. With the same forbearance and humility, he believed that on many subjects it was impossible for human reason to be satisfied; yet this impression did not lead him to cut off all speculation concerning those higher matters. He rather applied another kind of argument suitable to their nature, and by *analogy* obtained an insight beyond that of the senses. Of the sublime mysteries of our religion he loved to reason, not rashly or with presumption, but according to that intellectual scale by which God has permitted us to estimate things so far above mortal reach: and he had this proof given him of

the propriety of his practice in this respect, that after all his theories, he found himself still more lowly-minded, more conscious of his own ignorance and weakness, fuller of every christian grace, and fitter to practise every virtue. On Sunday evenings, after attending public worship, he made it a rule to meditate on some important question in religion; and because he could better follow the order of his thoughts when he wrote them down, as well as for the sake of improving himself by their subsequent perusal, he was accustomed to commit them to paper at the time. Though these opportunities may not seem to promise the completion of any considerable undertaking, yet it is a fact, that all his moral and religious works are the production of these scattered hours.

As he was himself a great lover of learning, so was there nothing more delightful to him than to encourage it in others. To young people, who were fond of reading, he was particularly kind and attentive, pointing out

to them the best plans for study, and answering all their questions with a readiness and sweetness, which won them to acquaint him with all their doubts and difficulties. He was no less earnest to promote their moral improvement, availing himself of his high character and great experience, to give advice on many things relating to their appearance and behaviour; so that many young men forsook the vanities of dress, with other youthful follies, from a desire to obtain his favourable opinion.

A benevolent disposition, and great simplicity of manners, gave a charm to his deportment, which fascinated all who approached him. But his friends were particularly happy in his company, for he was playfully free and communicative in discourse, and never at a loss for some pleasant topic, which might equally interest and inform them by its discussion. It was a rule with him, never to interrupt another in his speech; and this forbearance caused others to listen

to him with equal patience; by which means many a subject came to be sifted to the bottom, which would otherwise have procured only a smart remark. It allowed every one time to look over and arrange his own thoughts, and to offer the best of his judgment for the edification of his hearers. If any person could be justified in anticipating and interrupting the delivery of another's observations, it would have been Mr. Hale, whose information and ingenuity were not often matched; but he was so far from presuming on this account, or thinking he had more to confer than to acquire, that he would have held it a proof of his want of sense, if he failed to extract something valuable out of every man's discourse. This caused Mr. Richard Baxter, the great theologian, to say of him, "I never more perceived in any man, how much great knowledge and wisdom facilitate addition, and the reception of any thing not before known. Such a one presently perceiveth that evidence which another is incapable of."

Hale said of himself that he was *naturally passionate;* but so effectually had he subdued the irritability of his temper, that except for a momentary rising of his colour, it could not be perceived that he was ever greatly moved. Persons of quick tempers are said to compensate for the frequency of their passion, by the shortness of its duration; while those who from duller feelings are slow to anger, take a long time to get rid of their resentment. It is almost a balance of evils. The best disposition is undoubtedly that which, naturally alive to provocation, is yet chastened to a gentleness which will not take offence, but makes every allowance for a brother's infirmity. A man of this temper will not be the less ready, when humanity or justice requires it, to defend himself, and to protect others, against the wantonness of insult, oppression, or brutality. Such was the character of Hale. He gave, without a fee, the best professional advice to a man who had once grievously injured him, "thanking God that he had learned to forget injuries." And

whenever his children or his servants had offended him, he deferred speaking till he was perfectly calm: then with a serenity and tenderness that could not be withstood, he so discreetly set before them their fault and its consequences, that he had no occasion to censure or condemn—their own hearts had done it already. But he would not retain in his service those who were decidedly immoral, observing, "he that by his place ought to punish disorders in other people, must by no means suffer them in his own house."

His kindness extended to the brute creation, as it must ever do, when it is founded on a right principle: the merciful man is merciful to his beast. He kept all his horses and dogs till they died of old age, and would never suffer them to be over-worked or ill treated. The only time he was ever known to be thoroughly angry was, when one of his servants suffered a little bird, that was kept in the house, to die for want of food.

Even in the best cause, he did not suffer his feelings to get the victory over reason. His son died under circumstances peculiarly distressing. To so kind-hearted a man, and so affectionate a father, this must have been a very severe affliction; yet to all outward appearance he maintained his usual equanimity; and, like a wise man, he observed to one who condoled with him on the occasion, that "these are the sad effects of living long: such must look to see many sad and unacceptable things."

Soon after he was called to the bar the civil wars broke out, and it became a difficult task for men in conspicuous stations to conduct themselves so as not to give offence. The rules by which Mr. Hale governed his actions at this critical season were, first, *by engaging in no faction*, and, secondly, *by the constant favouring and receiving those that were lowest.*

He had noticed in Cornelius Nepos, that

Pomponius Atticus, by closely adhering to these two maxims of prudence, had safely, and with the esteem of all parties, passed through the most hazardous times of the Roman republic; and he thought it an experiment worth repeating. That he was equally fortunate may be collected from this striking fact, that though he heartily defended many of the royal party when they were tried for high treason, and had the honour to be appointed counsel for the unhappy Charles, when he fell the victim of an indiscreet opposition to popular sentiment; yet Cromwell so well knew the integrity of the man, and the influence of his high reputation, that he made him one of his judges in the Court of Common Pleas. On the restoration, King Charles the Second appointed him Lord Chief Baron: and the great Earl of Clarendon, when he delivered him his commission, concluded his speech with the following singular compliment: — "that if the king could have found out an honester and fitter man for that employment, he would

not have advanced him to it; and that he had therefore preferred him, because he knew none that deserved it so well." The honour of knighthood is usually granted to those who are advanced to this dignity; but such was the modesty of Mr. Hale, that it was only by the stratagem of meeting him unexpectedly at the Lord Chancellor's, that the King could find an opportunity of conferring the title.

As he felt a real love for his fellow-creatures, so with the strongest emotions of pity did he regard all those, who for their crimes were brought before him in his judicial capacity. During their trials, he expressed himself towards them with a solemnity that bespoke his deep sense of the awful responsibility of his office, yet accompanied with a certain compassionate and encouraging demeanour, which left them nothing to fear from the influence of private feeling. The terrors of the law were sufficient, he thought, without any aggravation or colouring from

him. Not that he omitted to make those salutary impressions which his duty enjoined him; but he preferred exciting them by plain and simple language. And when he had to pass sentence, there was something so fervent and pathetic in his speech to the prisoner, that many persons have said "they heard few such sermons."

In his earlier years he laid down certain rules for the regulation of his life, which mark by what steps he arrived at eminence. Happily for those who wish to follow his example, a rough draught of these has been preserved.

MORNING.

I. To lift up the heart to God, in thankfulness for renewing my life.

II. To renew my covenant with God in Christ, 1. By renewed acts of faith, receiving Christ, and rejoicing in the height of that relation. 2. Resolution of being one of his people, doing him allegiance.

III. Adoration and prayer.

IV. Setting a watch over my own infirmities and passions, over the snares laid in our way. *Perimus licitis**.

DAY EMPLOYMENT.

There must be an employment: two kinds.

I. Our ordinary calling: to serve God in it. It is a service to Christ though never so mean. Colos. iii. Here *faithfulness, diligence, cheerfulness.* Not to overlay myself with more business than I can bear.

II. Our spiritual employments: mingle somewhat of God's immediate service in this day.

REFRESHMENTS.

I. Meat and drink, moderation seasoned with somewhat of God.

II. Recreations. 1. Not our business. 2. Suitable. No games, if given to covetousness or passion.

* We perish by indulgences.

IF ALONE.

I. Beware of wandering, vain, lustful thoughts: fly from thyself rather than entertain these.

II. Let thy solitary thoughts be profitable. View the evidences of thy salvation, the state of thy soul, the coming of Christ, thy own mortality: it will make thee humble and watchful.

COMPANY.

Do good to them. Use God's name reverently. Beware of leaving an ill impression of ill example. Receive good from them if more knowing.

EVENING.

Cast up the accounts of the day. If aught amiss, beg pardon. Gather resolution of more vigilance. If well, bless the mercy and grace of God that hath supported thee.

When he was made a Judge, he drew up another paper for his government. Though it has reference to duties which few are placed in situations to perform, it contains some excellent principles of universal application, which render it worthy of attention.

THINGS NECESSARY TO BE CONTINUALLY HAD IN REMEMBRANCE.

I. That, in the administration of justice, I am intrusted for God, the King, and Country; and therefore,

II. That it be done; 1. Uprightly; 2. Deliberately; 3. Resolutely.

III. That I rest not upon my own understanding or strength, but implore and rest upon the direction and strength of God.

IV. That, in the execution of justice, I carefully lay aside my own passions, and not give way to them, however provoked.

V. That I be wholly intent upon the business that I am about, remitting all other

cares and thoughts, as unseasonable, and interruptions.

VI. That I suffer not myself to be prepossessed with any judgment at all, till the whole business and both parties be heard.

VII. That I never engage myself in the beginning of any cause, but reserve myself unprejudiced till the whole be heard.

VIII. That in business capital, though my nature prompt me to pity, yet to consider that there is also a pity due to the country.

IX. That I be not too rigid in matters purely conscientious, where all the harm is diversity of judgment.

X. That I be not biassed with compassion to the poor, or favour to the rich, in point of justice.

XI. That popular, or court applause, or distaste, have no influence into any thing I do, in point of distribution of justice.

XII. Not to be solicitous what men will say or think, so long as I keep myself exactly according to the rules of justice.

XIII. If in criminals it be a measuring cast, to incline to mercy and acquittal.

XIV. In criminals that consist merely in words, when no more harm ensues, moderation is no injustice.

XV. In criminals of blood, if the fact be evident, severity is justice.

XVI. To abhor all private solicitations, of what kind soever, and by whomsoever, in matters depending.

XVII. To charge my servants: 1. Not to interpose in any business whatsoever. 2. Not to take more than their known fees. 3. Not to give any undue precedence to causes. 4. Not to recommend counsel.

XVIII. To be short and sparing at meals, that I may be the fitter for business.

In the year 1671, Sir Matthew Hale was appointed Lord Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench. In this situation he manifested his usual humility, benevolence, industry, judgment, and piety; but to greater advantage, as the sphere of his usefulness

was enlarged. For four years and a half he faithfully discharged this important trust. At the end of that time his constitution suddenly gave way. He became afflicted with asthma, and soon after was attacked by dropsy. Feeling that he could not possibly recover, he made haste to resign his office, that he might set his affairs in order, and prepare for death. Bishop Burnet says, in that biography from which this Memoir is principally composed, that Sir Matthew "had been a long time wearied with the distractions that his employment had brought on him; and his profession had become ungrateful to him." Herein we perceive traces of the same conscientious scruples by which his father had been influenced: but in Sir Matthew they were qualified by other considerations. What these were, and in what light he always regarded his profession, may be seen from the following paper, drawn up when he was resolved to retire altogether from public business.

"First, If I consider the business of my profession, whether as an advocate or as a judge, it is true, I do acknowledge, by the institution of Almighty God, and the dispensation of his Providence, I am bound to industry and fidelity in it; and as it is an act of obedience unto his will, it carries with it some things of religious duty, and I may and do take comfort in it, and expect a reward of my obedience to him, and the good that I do to mankind therein, from the bounty and beneficence, and promise of Almighty God: and it is true also, that without such employments, civil societies cannot be supported, and great good redounds to mankind from them; and in these respects, the conscience of my own industry, fidelity, and integrity in them, is a great comfort and satisfaction to me. But yet this I must say concerning these employments, considered simply in themselves, that they are very full of cares, anxieties, and perturbations.

"Secondly, That though they are beneficial to others, yet they are of the

least benefit to him that is employed in them.

"Thirdly, That they do necessarily involve the party, whose office it is, in great dangers, difficulties, and calumnies.

"Fourthly, That they only serve for the meridian of this life, which is short and uncertain.

"Fifthly, That though it be my duty faithfully to serve in them, while I am called to them, and till I am duly called from them, yet they are great consumers of that little time we have here; which, as it seems to me, might be better spent in a pious contemplative life, and a due provision for eternity. I do not know a better temporal employment than Martha had, in testifying her love and duty to our Saviour, by making provision for him; yet our Lord tells her, That though she was troubled about many things, there was only one thing necessary, and Mary had chosen the better part."

Consistently with the result of these views,

he obtained his discharge, after much delay, from the king's unwillingness to part with so faithful a servant. Then did his spirit rejoice in its new found liberty, as a bird that has escaped from the cage. But the bird that has been long confined, loses the power to fly about and enjoy itself as formerly: and now Sir Matthew Hale had got liberty indeed; but his health was ruined, and the energies of his mind were rapidly decaying. He had but little power and a short time left to realize that happy privacy which he so feelingly describes in the following translation from Seneca's Thyestes.

Let him that will, ascend the tottering seat
Of courtly grandeur, and become as great
As are his mounting wishes: as for me,
Let sweet repose and rest my portion be.
Give me some mean obscure recess; a sphere
Out of the road of business, or the fear
Of falling lower; where I sweetly may
Myself and dear retirement still enjoy.
Let not my life or name be known unto
The grandees of the time, tost to and fro
By censures or applause; but let my age
Slide gently by, not overthwart the stage

Of public action; unheard, unseen,
And unconcern'd, as if I ne'er had been.
And thus, while I shall pass my silent days
In shady privacy, free from the noise
And bustles of the mad world, then shall I
A good old innocent plebeian die.
Death is a mere surprise, a very snare
To him, that makes it his life's greatest care,
To be a public pageant, known to all,—
But unacquainted with himself doth fall.

He quitted office on the 15th of February, 1676; and died on the Christmas-day following. The interval was spent in exercises of piety and devotion. He had always been constant in the use of family prayer, performing the duty himself, if there was no clergyman present: and on Sundays it had been his uniform practice to repeat to his family the heads of the sermons, with some further remarks and expositions of his own. He usually invited his poor neighbours to dine with him on that day, at his own table; and when any were sick, he sent the choicest of his food to their houses.

From the commencement of his public life he had laid aside a tenth of his income for charitable uses; and with his perquisites, when he was a judge, he secretly liberated many poor debtors from prison. He did not neglect even common beggars, but felt it his duty to relieve them with the small sums he could conveniently spare; thinking that charity consisted not so much in the good actually done, as in the motive with which it is attempted to be done. It is well for mankind that Charity, which is the greatest and most necessary of all christian virtues, is not the impulse of a feeling heart; for that depends on certain constitutional tendencies, with which no man can endow himself: nor that it consists in the success which attends our alms; for much of that is derived from prudence and penetration, in which the best of men are frequently deficient: still less, that the magnitude or splendour of the gift declares the charity of the donor; for riches are not the lot of all;

and we know that a man may give all he has to the poor, and his body to be burned, and yet want charity. True charity is known by the motive, and by that alone; and none but He who sees the heart, can tell who is charitable, and who is not. It is not for us, therefore, to judge others: nor should we attempt to do it, if we have charity; for charity "thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." But though we judge not others, we are commanded to judge ourselves; and this is the test by which we may try our charity:—Love to God. If we love Him we shall keep his commandments, and obedience to these is perfect charity—it comprises the whole of our duty to our neighbour. If we do every thing to them, which we in their situations, should wish them or others to do to us; and this, not for the relief of our own feelings, or to gain the good opinion of men, but from a desire to please God by our behaviour;

then we possess that charity which shall never fail: and this charity is what every man may possess, by God's grace, whenever he pleases.

The habit of considering himself as he appeared in the sight of the Almighty, and not in the estimation of men, made Sir Matthew Hale avoid all undue opportunities of giving publicity to the good parts of his character. He had such an aversion to all ostentation in religion, that he was careful to make no great professions, wishing that his deeds, rather than his tongue, should make known his faith; and humbly fearing lest by any means he should at last fall away, and cause the religion of Christ to be evil spoken of. This was especially the case with him in his private devotions, wherein he secluded himself from the observation even of his own family.

The nearer his death approached, the more fervent and frequent were his prayers;

and when his voice could no longer be heard, it might be seen from his eyes and hands being almost constantly lifted up, that his soul was still in earnest communion with that blessed Spirit, who soon after called it out of darkness into his marvellous light. For more than a year he had suffered such pain that he was unable to lie down in bed, but he never complained. His end was peaceful: he had no struggling, nor seemed to be in any pangs in his last moments.

Such was the life and death of Sir Matthew Hale. His character speaks for itself, and needs no comment: it is seen in all his actions; and is further portrayed in the Letters which compose this little volume. They were written at different periods, while he was on the circuit as a judge. They prove how much the happiness of his children was the object of his constant solicitude. Loving them so sincerely, he could not but address to them the best of his understanding. Whatever conduct would

carry them most comfortably through this world into a blessed eternity, we may be sure he would recommend; and such precepts only would he give them, as he had found by experience were conducive to so desirable an end. Many books on such topics have been composed for the sole purpose of being published, and what they contain is therefore sometimes the result of ingenious speculation; but these Letters were designed purely for private use, and every word of them is practical wisdom. Let them be read then with that confidence and prepossession in their favour, with which, as his own children, we should have received them; and, by the blessing of Heaven, they will not fail of producing a good effect.

LETTER I.

ON RELIGION.

DEAR CHILDREN,

I INTENDED to have been at Alderley this Whitsuntide, desirous to renew those Counsels and Advices which I have often given you, in order to your greatest concernment; namely, the everlasting good and welfare of your Souls hereafter, and the due ordering of your Lives and conversations here.

And although young people are apt, through their own indiscretion, or the ill advice of others, to think these kind of entertainments but dry and empty matters, and the morose and needless interpositions of old men; yet give him leave to tell you, that very well knows what he says, these things are of more

importance and concernment to you, than external gifts and bounties, (wherein) nevertheless, I have not been wanting to you, according to my ability.

This was my intention in this journey; and though I have been disappointed therein, yet I thought good, by letters and messages, to do something that might be done that way for your benefit, that I had otherwise intended to have done in person.

Assure yourselves, therefore, and believe it from one that knows what he says, from one that can neither have any reason or end to deceive you; that the best gift I can give you is good Counsel; and the best counsel I can give you, is that which relates to your greatest import and concernment; namely, Religion.

And therefore since I cannot at this time deliver it to you in person, I shall do it by this letter, wherein I shall not be very large, but keep myself within the bounds proper for a letter, and to those things only, at this time, which may be most of present use and moment to you; and by your due observance of these directions, I shall have a good character, both of your dutifulness to God, your obedience to

your Father, and also of your discretion and prudence; for it is most certain, that as Religion is the best means to advance and certify human nature, so no man shall be either truly wise or truly happy without it, and the love of it; no, not in this life, much less in that which is to come.

First. Therefore every morning and every evening, upon your knees, humbly commend yourselves to the Almighty God in Prayer, begging his mercy to pardon your sins, his grace to direct you, his providence to protect you; returning him humble thanks for all his dispensations towards you; yea, even for his very corrections and afflictions; entreating him to give you wisdom and grace, to make a sober, patient, humble, profitable use of them, and in his due time to deliver you from them; concluding your prayers with the Lord's Prayer. This will be a certain means to bring your mind into a right frame, to procure you comfort and blessing, and to prevent thousands of inconveniences and mischiefs, to which you will be otherwise subjected.

Secondly. Every morning read seriously and reverently a portion of the Holy Scripture, and acquaint yourself with the history and doctrine thereof: it is a book full of light and wisdom, will make you wise to eternal life, and furnish you with directions and principles, to guide and order your life safely and prudently.

Thirdly. Conclude every evening with reading some part of the Scripture, and Prayer in your Family.

Fourthly. Be strict and religious observers of the Lord's-day. Resort to your parish-church twice that day, if your health will permit, and attend diligently and reverently to the public prayers and sermons. He cannot reasonably expect a blessing from God the rest of the week, that neglects his duty to God, in the due consecration of this day, to the special service and duty to God, which this day requires.

Fifthly. Receive the Sacrament at least three

times in the year, and oftener, as there is occasion, in your parish-church. The laws of the land require this, and the law of your Saviour requires it, and the law of duty and gratitude requires it of you. Prepare yourselves seriously for this service before-hand, and perform it with reverence and thankfulness. The neglect of this duty procures great inconvenience and strangeness: and commonly the neglect hereof ariseth from some conceited opinion, that people inconsiderately take up; but most ordinarily from a sluggishness of mind, and an unwillingness to fit and prepare the mind for it, or to leave some sinful or vain course that men are not willing to leave, and yet condemn themselves in the practice of.

Sixthly. Beware of those that go about to seduce you from that religion, wherein you have been brought up hitherto; namely, the true Protestant Religion. It is not unknown to any, that observes the state of things in the world, how many erroneous religions are scattered abroad in the world; and how industrious men of false persuasions are to make proselytes. There are Antinomians, Quakers, Anabaptists,

and divers others that go about to mislead themselves and others: nay, although the laws of this kingdom, and especially the statute of 23 Eliz. cap. 1. have inflicted the severest penalty upon those that go about to withdraw persons to the Romish religion, from the religion established in England, as any man that reads that statute may find; yet there are scattered up and down the world divers factors and agents, that under several disguises and pretences, endeavour the perverting of weak and easy persons. Take heed of all such persuaders. And that you may know and observe the better, you shall ever find these artifices practised by them:

—They will use all flattering applications and insinuations to be master of your humour; and when they have gotten that advantage, they that seemed before to serve you, will then command you.

—They will use all possible skill to raise in you jealousy and dislike, towards those that may otherwise continue and keep you in the truth: as, to raise dislike in you against your minister; nay, rather than fail, to raise dissension among relations; yea, to cast jealousies

and surmises among them, if it may be instrumental to corrupt them.

—They will endeavour to withdraw people from the public ministry of God's word; encourage men to slight and neglect it; and when they have once effected this, they have a fair opportunity to infuse their own corrupt principles.

—They will engage you, by some means or other, to them; either by some real, but most ordinarily by some pretended kindness or familiarity; that, in a little time, you shall not dare to displease them: you must do and speak what they will have you, because some way or other you are entangled with them, or engaged to them; and then they become your governors, and you will not dare to contradict or disobey them.

These are some of those artifices, whereby crafty and subtle seducers gain proselytes, and bring men under captivity.

Seventhly. Be very careful to moderate your Passions, especially of choler and anger: it inflames the blood, disorders the brain, and for the time, exterminates not only religion,

but common reason: it puts the mind into confusion, and throws wild-fire into the tongue, whereby men give others advantage against them: it renders a man incapable of doing his duty to God, and puts a man upon acts of violence, unrighteousness, and injustice to men; therefore keep your passions under discipline, and under as strict a chain as you would keep an unruly curst mastiff. Look to it, that you give it not too much line at first; but if it hath gotten any fire within you, quench it presently with consideration, and let it not break out into passionate or unruly words or actions: but, whatever you do, let it not gangrene into malice, envy, or spite.

Eighthly. Send your children early to learn their Catechism, that they may take in the true principles of religion betimes, which may grow up with them, and habituate them both to the knowledge and practice of it; that they may escape the danger of corruption by error or vice, being antecedently seasoned with better principles.

Ninthly. Receive the blessings of God with

very much Thankfulness to him; for He is the root and fountain of all the good you do, or can receive.

Tenthly. Bear all afflictions and crosses patiently: it is your duty; for afflictions come not from the dust. The great God of heaven and earth is He, that sends these messengers to you; though, possibly, evil occurrences may be the immediate instruments of them. You owe to Almighty God an infinite subjection and obedience, and to expostulate with Him is rebellion; and as it is your duty, so it is your wisdom and your prudence: impatience will not discharge your yoke; but it will make it gall the worse, and sit the harder.

Eleventhly. Learn not only patience under your afflictions, but also profitably to improve them to your soul's good. Learn by them how vain and unprofitable things the World, and all the pleasures thereof are, that a sharp or a lingering sickness renders utterly tasteless. Learn how vain and weak a thing Human Nature is, which is pulled down to the gates of

death, and clothed with rottenness and corruption, by a little disorder in the blood, in a nerve, in a vein, in an artery. And since we have so little hold of a temporal life, which is shaken and shattered by any small occurrence, accident, or distemper; learn to lay hold of Eternal Life, and of that Covenant of peace and salvation, which Christ hath brought for all that believe and obey the Gospel of peace and salvation: there shall be no death, no sickness, no pain, no weakness, but a state of unchangeable and everlasting happiness. And if you thus improve Affliction, you are gainers by it; and most certain it is, that there is no more probable way, under heaven, to be delivered from affliction (if the wise God see it fit) than thus to improve it: for affliction is a messenger, and the rod hath a voice: and that is, to require mankind to be the more patient, and the more humble, and the more to acknowledge Almighty God in all our ways. And if men listen to this voice of the rod, and conform to it, the rod hath done his errand; and either will leave a man, or at least give a man singular comfort, even under the sharpest afflic-

tion. And this affliction, which is but for a moment, thus improved, will work for us an exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Twelfthly. Reverence your minister: he is a wise and a good man, and one that loves you, and hath a tender care and respect for you. Do not grieve him, either by neglect or disrespect. Assure yourselves, if there be any person who sets any of you against him, or provokes or encourageth any of you to despise or neglect him, that person, whoever he be, loves not you, nor the office he bears. And, therefore, as the laws of the land, and the Divine Providence, hath placed him at Alderley, to have a care of your souls; so I must tell you, I do expect you should reverence and honour him, for his own, for your, and for his office's sake.

And now I have written this long epistle to you, to perform that office for me that I should have done in person, if I could have taken this journey. The epistle is long; but it had been longer if I had had more time. And though,

perchance, some there may be in the world, that when they hear of it, will interpret it to be but the excursions and morose rules of old Age, unnecessary, and such as might have been spared; yet I am persuaded, it will find better acceptation thereof from you that are my Children. I am now on the shady side of three-score years: I write to you what you have often heard me in substance speak. And possibly when I shall leave this world, you will want such a remembrancer as I have been to you. The words that I now, and at former times have written to you, are words of truth and soberness; and words and advices that proceed from a heart, full of love and affection to you all. If I should see you do amiss in any thing, and should not reprove you, or if I should find you want counsel and direction, and should not give it, I should not perform the trust of a Father; and if you should not thankfully receive it, you would be somewhat defective in the duty you owe to God and me, as Children. As I have never spared my purse to supply you, according to my abilities, and the reasonableness of occasions, so I have never

been wanting to you in good and prudent counsels: and the God of Heaven give you wisdom, constancy, and fidelity, in the observance of them.

I am your ever loving father,

MATTHEW HALE.

May 20.

LETTER II.

ON SPEECH.

CHILDREN,

I THANK God I came well to Farrington this Saturday, about five of the clock, and because I have some leisure time at my inn, I could not spend that time more to my own contentment, and your benefit, than by my letter to give you all good Counsel: the subject whereof, at this time, shall be concerning Speech; because much of the good or evil that befals persons, doth occasionally happen by the well or ill managing of that part of human conversation.—I shall, as I have leisure and opportunity, at other times, give you my directions concerning other subjects.

And herein I shall advise you, first, how you are to entertain the Speeches of others, accord-

ing to the divers varieties thereof. Secondly, how you are to manage and order your own Speech.

As concerning the *former*, observe these directions: 1. Observe, and mark as well as you may, what is the temper and disposition of those persons, whose speeches you hear; whether they be grave, serious, sober, wise, discreet persons: if they be such, their speeches commonly are like themselves, and well deserve your attention and observation; but if they be light, impertinent, vain, passionate persons, their speech is, for the most part, according; and the best advantage, that you will gain by their speech, is but thereby to learn their dispositions, to discern their failings, and to make yourselves the more cautious, both in your conversation with them, and in your own speech and deportment; for in the unseemliness of their speech, you may better discern and avoid the like in yourselves.

2. If any person, that you do not very well know to be a person of truth, sobriety, and weight, relate strange stories, be not too ready or easy to believe them, nor report them after

him: and yet (unless he be one of your familiar acquaintance) be not too forward to contradict him; or, if the necessity of the occasion require you to declare your opinion of what is so reported, let it be modestly and gently, not too bluntly or coarsely: by this means, on the one side, you shall avoid being abused by your too much credulity; on the other side, you shall avoid quarrels and distaste.

3. If any man speak any thing to the disadvantage or reproach of one that is absent, be not too ready to believe it; only observe and remember it: for it may be it is not true; or it is not all true; or some other circumstances were mingled with it, which might give the business reported, a justification, or at least an allay, an extenuation, or a reasonable excuse. In most actions, if that which is bad alone, or seems to be so, be reported, omitting that which is good, or the circumstances that accompany it, any action may be easily misrepresented: be not too hasty, therefore, to believe a reproach, till you know the truth, and the whole truth.

4. If any person report unto you some in-

jury done to you by another, either in words or deeds, do not be over hasty in believing it, nor suddenly angry with the person so accused; for possibly it may be false or mistaken: and how unseemly a thing will it be, when your credulity and passion shall perchance carry you, upon a supposed injury, to do wrong to him that hath done you none: or, at least, when the bottom and truth of the accusation is known, you will be ashamed of your passion. Believe not a report, till the party accused be heard; and, if the report be true, yet be not transported either with passion, hasty anger, or revenge, for that will be your own torment and perturbation. Ever, when a person is accused or reported to have injured you, before you give yourself leave to be angry, think with yourself, Why should I be angry, before I am certain it is true? or, if it be true, how can I tell how much I should be angry, till I know the whole matter? Though, it may be, he hath done me wrong, yet possibly it is not so much as it is represented; or it was done by mistake; or, it may be, he is sorry for it. I will not be angry, till I know there be cause; and if there be cause, yet I will not be angry, till I know

the whole cause; for till then (if I must be angry at all), yet I know not how much to be angry; it may be, it is not worth my anger; or, if it be, it may be it deserves but a little.—This will keep your mind and carriage, upon such occasions, in a due temper and order; and will disappoint malicious or officious tale-bearers.

5. If a man, whose integrity you do not very well know, makes you great and extraordinary professions and promises, give him as kind thanks as may be, but give not much credit to it. Cast about with yourself, what may be the reason of this wonderful kindness: it is twenty to one, but you will find something that he aims at, besides kindness to you: it may be he hath something to beg, or buy of you, or to sell to you; or some such bargain that speaks out at last his own advantage, and not yours; and if he serve his turn upon you, or if he be disappointed, his kindness will grow cool.

6. If a man flatter and commend you to your face, or to one that he thinks will tell you of it, it is a thousand to one either he hath deceived, and abused you some way, or means to

do so. Remember the Fable of the Fox commending the singing of the Crow, when she had somewhat in her mouth that the Fox liked.

7. If a person be choleric, passionate, and give you ill language, remember, 1. Rather to pity him, than to be moved into anger and passion with him; for, most certainly, that man is in a distemper and disorder: observe him calmly, and you shall see him in so much perturbation and disturbance, that you will easily believe he is not a pattern to be imitated by you; and, therefore, return not choler, nor anger, for angry words; for you do but put yourself into a kind of frenzy, because you see him so. 2. Be sure you return not railing, reproaching, or reviling, for reviling; for it doth but kindle more heat; and you will find silence, or at least very gentle words, the most exquisite revenge of reproaches that can be: for either it will cure the distemper in the other, and make him see and be sorry for his passion, or it will torment him with more perturbation and disturbance. But, howsoever, it keeps your innocence, gives you a

deserved reputation of wisdom and moderation, and keeps up the serenity and composure of your mind: whereas, passion and anger do make a man unfit for any thing, that becomes him as a Man or as a Christian.

8. Some men are excellent in knowledge of husbandry, some of planting, some of gardening, some in the mathematics, some in one kind, some in another. In all your conversation learn, as near as you can, wherein the skill and excellence of any person lies, and put him upon talk of that subject; and observe it, and keep it in memory or writing: by this means you will glean up the worth and excellence of every person you meet with; and, at an easy rate, put together that, which may be for your use upon all occasions.

9. Converse not with a liar or a swearer, or a man of obscene or wanton language; for either he will corrupt you, or at least it will hazard your reputation to be one of the like making; and if it doth neither, yet will fill your memory with such discourses, that will be troublesome to you in after-time; and the returns of the remembrance of the passages,

which you long since heard of this nature, will haunt you, when your thoughts should be better employed.

Now, as concerning your *own* Speech, and how you are to manage it, something may be collected out of what goes before; but I shall add some things else.

1. Let your Speech be true. Never speak any thing for a Truth, which you know or believe to be false: it is a great sin against God, that gave you a tongue to speak your mind, and not to speak a lie: it is a great offence against Humanity itself; for where there is no truth, there can be no safe society between man and man: and it is an injury to the speaker; for besides the base disreputation it casts upon him, it doth in time bring a man to that baseness of mind, that he can scarce tell how to tell truth, or to avoid lying, even when he hath no colour of necessity for it; and in time he comes to such a pass, that as another man cannot believe he tells a truth, so [redacted] himself scarce knows when he tells a lie. And observe it, a Lie ever returns, with discovery and shame at the last.

2. As you must be careful not to lie, so you must avoid coming near it. You must not equivocate: you must not speak that absolutely, which you have but by hear-say, or relation: you must not speak that, as upon knowledge, which you have but by conjecture or opinion only.

3. Let your Words be few; especially when your betters, or strangers, or men of more experience or understanding, are in place; for you do yourself at once two great mischiefs:—1. You betray and discover your own weakness and folly. 2. You rob yourself of that opportunity, which you might otherwise have, to gain knowledge, wisdom, and experience, by hearing those that you silence by your impertinent talking.

4. Be not over-earnest, loud, or violent in Talking, for it is unseemly; and earnest, and loud talking, make you overshoot and lose your business: when you should be considering and pondering your thoughts, and how to express them significantly and to the purpose; you are striving to keep your tongue going, and to silence an opponent, not with reason, but with noise.

5. Be careful not to interrupt another in his talk. Hear him out: you will understand him the better, and be able to give him the better answer. It may be, if you will give him leave, he will say somewhat more than you have yet heard, or well understood, or that which you did not expect.

6. Always, before you speak, especially where the business is of moment, consider before-hand; weigh the sense of your mind which you intend to utter; think upon the expressions you intend to use; that they be significant, pertinent, and inoffensive: and whereas it is the ordinary course of inconsiderate persons, to speak their words, and then to think; or not to think till they speak; think first, and speak after, if it be in any matter of moment or seriousness.

7. Be willing to speak well of the absent, if you do not know they deserve ill; by this means, you shall make yourself many friends; and sometimes an undeserved commendation is not lost, to the party to whom it is given. I have known some men, that have met with an undeserved commendation, out of shame of being worse than they have been reported,

secretly to take up practices answerable to their commendation, and so to make themselves as good as they are reported.

8. Be sure you give not an ill report to any that you are not sure deserves it. And in most cases, though a man deserves ill, yet you should be sparing to report him so. In some cases, indeed, you are bound in honesty and justice to give that account, concerning the demerit or default of a person, that he deserves: as, namely, when you are called to give testimony for the ending of a controversy; or when the concealing of it may harden and encourage a person in an evil way, or bring another into danger. In such cases, the very duty of charity binds you to speak your knowledge; nay, your probable fear or suspicion of such a person; so it be done for prevention of greater inconvenience, and in love, and especially if the discovery be made to a person that hath a superintendence, care, or authority over the person complained of; for this is an act of love and duty. But for any person maliciously, busily, and with intent to scandalize another, to be whispering tales and stories to the prejudice of another, this is a

fault. If you know any good of any person, speak it as you have opportunity; if you know any evil, speak it, if it be really and prudently done for the good of him, and the safety of others; otherwise, rather choose to say nothing, than to say any thing reproachfully, maliciously, or officiously to his prejudice.

9. Avoid swearing, in your ordinary communication, unless called to it by the magistrate: and not only the grosser oaths, but the lesser; and not only oaths, but imprecations, earnest and deep protestations. As you have the commendable example of good men, to justify a solemn oath before a magistrate, so you have the precept of our Saviour forbidding it otherwise.

10. Avoid scoffing, and bitter and biting jeering, and jesting, especially at your friend's condition, credit, deformity, or natural defects of any person; for these leave a deep impression, and are a most apparent injustice: for were you so used, you would take it inwardly and amiss; and many times such an injury costs a man dear, when he little thinks of it.

11. Be very careful that you give no reproachful, bitter, menacing, or spiteful words

to any person, nay, not to servants, or other persons of an inferior condition; and that upon these considerations:—1. There is not the meanest person but you may stand in need of him in one kind, or at some time or another: good words make friends, bad words make enemies; it is the best prudence in the world to make as many friends as honestly you can, especially when it may be done at so easy a rate as a good word; and it is the greatest folly that can be, to make an enemy by ill words, which do not at all any good to the party that useth them. 2. Ill words provoke ill words again; and commonly such ill words as are gained by such a provocation, especially of an inferior, stick closer, and wound deeper, than such as come unprovoked by ill language, or from an equal. 3. Where faults are committed, they may, and by a superior must, be reproved: but let it be done without reproaches or bitterness, otherwise it loseth its due end and use; and, instead of reforming the offence, exasperates the offender, and makes him worse, and gives him the cudgel to strike again; because it discovers your own weakness, when you are reprehending another, and lays you

justly open to his reproof, and makes your own but scorned and disesteemed. I press this the rather, because, most ordinarily, ill language is the folly of children, and of weak and passionate people.

12. If there be occasion for you to speak in any company, always be careful, if you speak at all, to speak latest; especially if strangers are in company: for, by this means, you will have the advantage of knowing the sense, judgment, temper, and relations of others, which may be a great light and help to you in ordering your speech; and you will better know the inclination of the company, and speak with more advantage and acceptation, and with more security against giving offence.

13. Be careful that you commend not yourselves: it is the most unuseful and ungrateful thing that can be. You should avoid flattery from others, but especially decline flattering of yourselves: it is a sign your reputation is small and sinking, if your own tongues must be your flatterers or commenders; and it is a fulsome and unpleasing thing for others to hear it.

14. Abhor all foul, unclean, and obscene speeches: it is a sign that the heart is corrupt; and such kind of speeches will make it worse: it will taint and corrupt yourselves and those that hear it, and brings disreputation to those that use it.

15. Never use any profane speeches; nor make jests of Scripture expressions. When you use the names of God or of Christ, or any passages or words of the Holy Scripture, use them with reverence and seriousness, and not lightly, vainly, or scurrilously; for it is a taking of the name of God in vain.

16. If you hear of any unseemly expressions used in religious exercises, you must be careful to forget, and not to publish them; or if you at all mention them, let it be with pity and sorrow, not with derision or reproach.

17. Do not upbraid any, or deride any man for a pious, strict, or religious conversation; for, if he be sincere, you dishonour God and injure him; if he be a hypocrite, yet it is more than you know; or, if you know him to be such, yet his external piety and strictness is not his fault, but his dissimulation and hypocrisy; and though his hypocrisy be to be

detested, his external piety and religion is to be commended, not derided.

18. Have as little conversation as is possible with obstinate Heretics, or persons obstinately perverted in matters of religion; as Papists, Quakers, Anabaptists, Antinomians, Enthusiasts, and the like: but especially converse not with them in matters of religion; for, instead of converting them by your persuasions to the truth, you shall but harden them the more, and endanger yourself. They are to be dealt withal in these matters, only by persons of great abilities; for a perverted, corrupted mind, and obstinate spirit, carries in it a contagion, as infectious, and much more dangerous, than the plague in the body, where their opinions meet with a young and weak opponent.

And thus, Children, as the time and my remembrance would give me leave, I have set down some observations concerning this subject, for your direction and practice: what is wanting, you may abundantly supply by reading the wise counsels of Solomon, in his Book

of Proverbs. Read these my directions often, think of them seriously, and practise them diligently: though they seem but dry and ordinary things, yet you will find them useful in your conversation; which will be every day more evident unto you, as your judgment, understanding, and experience increase.

I have but little more to write at this time, but to wish and command you to remember my former counsels that I have often given you. Begin and end the day with private prayers to God, upon your knees; read the Scriptures, often and seriously; be attentive to the public worship of God, in the church; keep yourselves still in some good employment; for idleness is the devil's opportunity, and the nursery of vain and sinful thoughts, which corrupt the mind, and disorder the life. Let the Girls take care of such business of my family, as is proper for them; and their recreations may be walking abroad in the fields, in fair or frosty mornings, some work with their needle, reading of history or herbals, setting of flowers or herbs, practising their music, and such innocent

and harmless exercises. Let the Boys be diligent at their books, and when they have performed their tasks, I do not deny them such recreations as may be healthy, safe, and harmless. Be you all kind and loving one to another, honouring your minister, not bitter or harsh to my servants. Be respectful to all. Bear my absence patiently, cheerfully, and faithfully. Do all things as if I were present among you, and beheld you; for you have a greater Father than I am, that always, and in all places, beholds you, and knows your hearts and thoughts. Study to requite the love, and care, and expense of your father for you, with dutifulness, observance, and obedience to him; and account it an honour that God hath given you an opportunity, in my absence, by your care, faithfulness, and industry, to pay some part of that debt, that, by the laws of nature and gratitude, you owe unto me. Be frugal in my family, but let there be no want: provide conveniently for the poor that come to my door. And I pray God to fill all your hearts with his grace, fear, and love; and to let you see the advan-

tage and comfort of serving him; and that his blessing, and presence, and comfort, and direction, and providence, be with you, and over you all.

I am your ever loving father,

MATTHEW HALE.

LETTER III.

ON KEEPING THE LORD'S DAY.

CHILDREN,

WHEN I last lodged in this place, in my journey up to London, I sent you from hence divers instructions concerning your Speech; and how you should manage it; and required you to take copies of it, and to direct your practice according to it. I forgot to inquire of you, whether you had taken copies of it, but I hope you have; and I do again require you to be careful in observing those, and my former directions given to you, some in writing, and many more by word of mouth. I have been careful that my Example might be a visible direction to you; but if that hath been defective, or not so full and clear a pattern of your imitation, espe-

cially in respect of my different condition from yours, yet I am certain that those Rules and Directions, which I have at several times given you, both in writing, and by word of mouth, have been sound, and wholesome, and seasonable; and therefore I do expect that you should remember and practise them; and though your young years cannot yet, perchance, see the reason and use of them; yet assure yourselves, time and experience will make you know the benefit of them. In advice given to young people, it fares with them, as it doth with young children that are taught to read, or with young school-boys that learn their grammar rules: they learn their letters, and then they learn to spell a syllable, and then they learn to put together several syllables to make up a word; or they learn to decline a noun, or to form a verb; and all this while they understand not to what end all this trouble is, nor what it means. But when they come to be able to read English, or to make a piece of Latin, or to construe a Latin author, then they find all these rudiments were very necessary, and to good purpose; for by this means they come to understand what others have written, and to

know what they knew and wrote, and thereby improve their own knowledge and understanding. Just so it is with young people, in respect of counsel and instruction: when the father, or the minister, or some wise and understanding man, doth sometimes admonish, sometimes chide and reprove, sometimes instruct, they are apt to wonder why so much ado, and what they mean, and it is troublesome and tedious, and seems impertinent; and they are ready to say within themselves, that the time were better spent in riding, or hunting, or merriment, or gaming; but when they come to riper years, then they begin to find that those instructions of the ancient are of excellent use, to manage the conversation, and to direct the actions, and to avoid inconveniencies, and mischiefs, and miscarriages, to which they are subject without the help of these counsels. And therefore it hath been my practice, to give you line upon line, and precept upon precept, to enable you to steer and order your course of life through an evil and dangerous world; and to require you to be *frequent* in reading the Scriptures, with due observation and understanding, which will

make you wise for this life, and that which is to come.

I am now come well to Farrington, from whence I wrote to you my former instructions concerning your Words and Speech; and I now intend to write something to you of another subject, viz. your OBSERVATION OF THE LORD'S-DAY, commonly called Sunday: and this I do for these reasons. —

1. Because it hath pleased God to cast my lot so, that I am to rest at this place upon that day; and the consideration, therefore, of that duty, is proper for me and for you: it is *opus diei in die suo*, 'the work fit and proper for that day.'

2. Because I have, by long and sound EXPERIENCE, found that the due observance of this day, and of the duties of it, hath been of singular comfort and advantage to me; and I doubt not but it will prove so to you. God Almighty is the Lord of our time, and lends it to us; and as it is but just we should consecrate this part of that time to him, so I have found, by a strict and diligent observation, that a due observation of the duty of this day, hath ever had joined to it a blessing upon the

rest of my time; and the week that hath been so begun, hath been blessed and prosperous to me; and on the other side, when I have been negligent of the duties of this day, the rest of the week hath been unsuccessful, and unhappy to my own secular employments; so that I could easily make an estimate of my successes, in my own secular employments the week following, by the manner of my passing of this day; and this I do not write lightly or inconsiderately, but upon a long and sound observation and experience.

3. Because I find in the world much Looseness, and Apostacy from this duty. People begin to be cold and careless in it, allowing themselves sports, and recreations, and secular employments in it, without any necessity; which is a sad spectacle, and an ill-presage. It concerns me, therefore, (that am your father) as much as I may, to rescue you from that sin, which the examples of others, and the inclination and inconsiderateness of youth, are otherwise apt to lead you into.

I shall therefore set down unto you particularly (and not in generals only) these things;

1. What is the reason and ground of your observation of this day. 2. What things ought not to be done upon this day, which possibly may be lawful upon another day. 3. What things may be done upon this day. 4. What things are either fit or necessary to be done in order to the sanctification of this day.

Touching the first of these, viz. the *reason* of the observation and sanctification of this day: the reasons are these. —

1. It is a moral Duty, that since the glorious God gives me my time, I should consecrate and set apart some portion of that time, in a special manner, to his service.

2. And because the glorious God best knows, what portion of time is fit to be peculiarly dedicated to his service; that so the morality of that time might be determined unto some, certainly; he hath, by his express precept, given to his ancient people the Jews, limited one Day of seven, to be that special portion of time, which he would have peculiarly dedicated to his service; and so to conclude, and [gather] into it the morality of that duty.

3. This seventh portion of time, under the old law given to the Jews, was determined by the precept and command of God, in the Fourth Command; and likewise, by his own example, confined to the Seventh day from the Creation, upon which the Lord rested from his works of creation.

4. But our Saviour Christ, who is the Son of God, blessed for ever, and is Lord of the Sabbath*, — fulfilling the word of our redemption by his Resurrection upon the first day of the week, and by his Mission of the Holy Ghost, miraculously, the first day of the week, and by the secret message of the Spirit to the apostles and primitive church, — hath translated the observation of the seventh day of the week, to the first day of the week, which is our Christian Sabbath: that as our Christian baptism succeeds the Sacrament of circumcision, and as our Christian *Pascha*, the Sacrament of the Eucharist, succeeded the Jewish passover; so our Christian Sabbath, the first day of the week, succeeds the Sabbath of the seventh day of the week; and that morality, which was by Almighty God, under that

* Matt. xii.

covenant, confined to the seventh day, is, by the example of Christ and his apostles, to us Gentiles, transferred to the first day of the week; and that which would have been morally a violation of the morality of the Fourth Command, under the Jewish Sabbath, is a violation of the same Fourth Command, if done upon the Christian Sabbath, — though the strictness and severity enjoined to the Jews, be not altogether the same that is now required of Christians. And thus you have the reason of the obligation, upon us Christians, to observe the first day of the week; because, by more than a human institution, the morality of the Fourth Command is transferred to the first day of the week, being our Christian Sabbath; and so the Fourth Commandment is not abrogated, but only the day changed; and the Morality of that Command only translated, not annulled.

Concerning the second. It is certain that what is *unlawful* to be done upon another day is much more unlawful upon this; as excess and intemperance and the like sinful and unlawful actions. But further, there are many things that may be lawfully done on another day,

which may not lawfully be done upon this; and many things that are not only lawful upon another day, but also fit and decent, which are yet unfit to be done upon this day. Upon other days we may, and must employ ourselves in our secular and ordinary callings; we may use bodily exercises and recreations, as bowling, shooting, hunting, and divers other recreations; we may study human learning: but I hold these to be not only unfit, but unlawful to be used upon this day; and therefore remember it. Moderate walking may thus far be used, so far only as it enableth you to the more cheerful and lively performance of the duties of this day; and therefore I allow you to walk soberly about half an hour after dinner, to digest your meat, that you be not drowsy, nor indisposed in the religious duties of the day. Merry, but harmless talking, or talking about sports or worldly business, may be used another day, but not upon this. Feastings may be sometimes seasonably used upon other days, but are not fit upon this day. Let only such provision be made upon this day, as may be necessary for the feeding of the family and the poor; and therefore I hold that curiosities, baking of meats, and superfluous provisions

upon this day, are to be avoided, as being an unnecessary breaking of the rest of this day, and unbeseeming the solemnity of it.

Thirdly: What things *may* be done this day, is a question of a great latitude; because circumstances are many, that do much diversify the actions of men, and many times render them lawful or unlawful, according to those varieties of circumstances. Therefore I shall shortly set down those things that do not of themselves directly tend to the sanctification of this day, that yet may, and sometimes must, be done upon this day: for there were many things that were strictly enjoined to the Jews, in their observation of their Sabbath, which were ceremonial, and concerned only that state, and do not oblige under the Gospel; as their dressing of meat upon this day was prohibited to them, but not to us: and many more things they did forbear and count unlawful, which, in truth, were not only not forbidden, but enjoined and commanded: for which our Lord reproves the Pharisees*, who accounted it a breach of the Sabbath to heal the sick, or to pluck the ears

* Matt. xii.

of corn for the necessary relief of hunger. Therefore,

1. Works of absolute *necessity* for man or beasts, may be done upon the Lord's-day. And those I call works of necessity, which cannot be done before the day, or after, without apparent danger; as, for instance, stopping of the breach of a sea-wall; supporting a house that, upon a sudden tempest or casualty, is ready to fall; pulling out an ox or other beast, fallen into a ditch; preventing of a trespass, that by a sudden accident, may be occasioned to my corn or my neighbour's; setting of a broken bone; physic, to remove an incumbent or imminent disease, or pain; milking of cows; feeding of cattle; the necessary dressing of meat for the family; and many more instances of that kind. But yet therein, great wariness and integrity must be used; for, otherwise, men, under pretence of necessity, will take the liberty to do what they please. Therefore, take these cautions concerning necessity:

—That is not a necessity, that excuseth a work upon this day, which might have been reasonably foreseen and done before the day; as, for instance, a man hath a necessity to dress

meat for his family, which he might have provided on the Saturday, and neglects it. This necessity will not justify him in sending two or three miles to buy meat upon the Lord's-day.

— That is not a necessity, which may be forborne to be done, without any absolute destruction or loss of the thing, until the morrow. If a rick of hay be on fire, I may endeavour to quench it on the Lord's-day: but if my corn be cut, and lying upon the ground on the *Saturday;* though the weather be rainy, or inclining to wet, I may not make it into cocks, or fetch it home upon the Lord's-day; because, possibly, Almighty God may send fair weather to-morrow. And therefore, in my forbearance, I do two duties under one: *viz.* observe his law, and rest upon his providence. ***Men make necessities, many times, to serve their ease, and sloth, and fancies, when in truth there is none; but the business may be deferred without any danger. If we would be more faithful in our obedience to God, we should find many pretended necessities, to vanish into mere imaginations.

2. Works of *Charity.* — Relief of the poor,

administering physic upon an apparent necessity, visiting or comforting the afflicted, admonishing the disorderly, persuading peace between neighbours offended, and endeavouring to compose differences which require not much examination, or cannot be deferred without an apparent danger of greater mischief,—these are not only permitted, but commendable, nay, commanded upon this day. But if the business require examination, or may be deferred till to-morrow, then it is best to defer such examinations and treaties, between offended parties, till another day; because they will take away too much of the little precious portion of time of this day, and may be as well done to morrow.

As for the fourth, What is proper, fit, or necessary to be done, in order to the *Sanctification* of this day, I will set down particularly: for generals seldom produce any great effect; because every man is apt to construe them according to his own mind and liking.

1. I would not have you meddle with any recreations, pastimes, or ordinary work of your calling, from Saturday night, at eight of the

clock, till Monday morning. For though I am not apt to think that Saturday night is part of the Christian Sabbath, yet it is fit then to prepare the heart for it.

2. Rise at least three hours before morning sermon; and when you have made yourself fully ready, and washed, and fitted yourself for the solemnity of the day, read two chapters in the Bible; and then go solemnly to your *private* prayer, and desire of God his grace, to enable you to sanctify his day: and, after your private prayer, read another chapter; and let your reading be with attention, observation, and uncovered on your head.

3. When you are in the *public* worship and service of God, be uncovered all the while of reading, praying, or preaching; and if the weather be too cold, wear a satin cap.

4. Kneel upon your knees at Prayer; stand up at the reading of the Psalms, and at the first and second Lessons, and the Epistle and Gospel, the Hymns and Creeds; so you shall avoid offence, and give the same honour to every part of the holy Scripture: but stand not up at reading of any Apocryphal book, if any happen to be read.

5. Sit at the Sermon and be very attentive at your prayer, and in your hearing. I commend your *writing* the sermon, especially till you are one or two-and-twenty years old; because young minds are apt to wander; and writing the sermon fixeth them, and maketh them more attentive.

6. When the minister readeth any of the Psalms or Lessons, turn to them in your Bible, and go along with him: it will fasten your attention, and prevent wandering thoughts.

7. Be very attentive and serious at Church: use no laughing or gazing about, nor whispering; unless it be to ask those by you something of the sermon that you slipped in writing.

8. Sing the Singing Psalms, with the rest of the congregation.

9. After sermon, eat moderately at dinner, rather sparingly than plentifully upon this day; that you may be fit for the afternoon's exercise, without drowsiness or dulness.

10. Walk half an hour after dinner in the garden to digest your meat; then go to your chamber and peruse your notes, or recollect what you remember of the sermon, until it be church-time.

11. If you are well, be sure you go to church morning and afternoon, and be there before the minister begin, and stay till he hath ended; and all the while you are at church, carry yourself gravely, soberly, and reverently.

12. After Evening Sermon, go up to your chamber and read a chapter in the Bible: then examine what you have written, or recollect what you have heard. And if the sermon be not repeated in your father's house, but be repeated in the minister's house, go to the minister's house, to the repetition of the sermon.

13. In all your speeches or actions of this day, let there be no lightness nor vanity. Use no running, or leaping, or playing, or wrestling; use no jesting, or telling of tales, or foolish stories; no talk about worldly business; but let your actions and speech be such as the day is, serious and sacred, tending to learn or instruct in the great business of your knowledge of God, and his will, and your own duty.

4. After Supper, and prayers ended in my family, every one of you going to bed, kneel down upon your knees, and desire of God his pardon, for what you have done amiss this day, and his blessing upon what you have heard,

and his acceptance of what you have endeavoured in his service.

15. Perform all this cheerfully, and uprightly, and honestly, and count it not a burden to you; for assure yourselves you shall find a blessing from God in so doing. And remember it is your father that tells you so, and that loves you, and will not deceive you; and (which is more than that) remember that the eternal God hath promised, "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord;* and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it *."

And thus I have written to you of the observation of the Lord's-day; wherein, though I have omitted many things, that might have

* Isaiah, lviii. 13, 14.

been fit to be inserted, yet you must consid that I had but a small portion of time allow me to write, while I lay at an inn, and upo that day wherein I have performed those duti which I now enjoin you. Let the original be laid up safely for your brother R. and every [one] of you take copies of it, that you may thereby remember the Counsels of

YOUR LOVING FATHER.

October the 20th, 1662.

LETTER IV.

TO ONE OF HIS SONS,

RECOVERING FROM A DANGEROUS SICKNESS *.

SON ——

ALTHOUGH, by reason of the contagiousness of your disease, and the many dependents I have upon me, I thought it not convenient to come unto you during your sickness, yet I have not been wanting in my earnest prayers to Almighty God for you, nor in using the best means I could for your Recovery.

It hath pleased God to hear my prayers for you, and above means and hopes now to restore you to a competent degree of health; for which

* The small-pox, which seized him when he was a young man, in the prime of life.

I return unto him my humble and hearty thanks and now you are almost ready to come abroad again, therefore I have thought fit to write this little book to you for these reasons:—

1. Because it is not yet seasonable for you to come to me, in respect of these same reasons above mentioned, which hitherto have restrained my coming to you.

2. Because, at your coming abroad, you will be subject to temptations, by young and inconsiderate company, which, instead of serious thankfulness to God for his mercy to you, might perchance persuade you to a vain and light jollity. And I thought fit to send you these lines, to prevent such inconsiderate impressions, and to meet you just at your coming abroad, to season you with more wise and serious principles.

3. Because you are even now come out of a great and sore visitation, and therefore in all probability, in the fittest temper, to receive the impressions of a serious epistle from your Father.

And I have chosen to put it into this little volume, because it is somewhat too long for a

letter, and may be better preserved for your future use and memory.

God Almighty hath brought you to the very gates of death, and showed you the terror and danger of it: and after that he had shown you this spectacle of your own mortality, he hath marvellously rescued and delivered you from that danger, and given you life, even from the dead; so that you are as a man new born into the world, or returned to life again, which now you seem, as it were, to begin. You have passed through those two great dispensations of the Divine Providence, those two great experiments, that God is pleased sometimes to use towards the children of men; namely, correction and deliverance, his rod and his staff. And therefore, in all reasonable conjecture, this is the most seasonable time to give you a lecture upon both, and those admonitions which, may be, render the one and the other profitable unto you. And this I shall endeavour to do in these following lines.

You shall not need to fear that I intend to upbraid you with the errors of your youth, or to expostulate with you touching them; for I

do assure you I do from my heart forgive you all your follies and miscarriages. And I do assure myself that you have repented of them, and resolved against them for the time to come; and that thereupon, God Almighty hath also fully forgiven what is past: and this is a great assurance thereof to me, in that he hath so wonderfully restored you, and given you, as it were, a new life, wherein you may obey and serve him better than ever you yet did. And therefore, if in this letter there be any touches concerning former vanities, assure yourself they are not angry repetitions, but only necessary cautions for your future ordering of your life.

The business of these papers is principally to commend unto you two general remembrances, and certain results and collections that arise from them: they are all seasonable for your present condition, and will be of singular use and benefit to you in the whole ensuing course of your life.

First. I would have you, as long as you live, remember your late sickness in all its circumstances, and these plain and profitable inferences and advices that arise from it.

Secondly. I would have you remember, as long as you live, your great deliverance, and the several circumstances of it, and those necessary duties that are incumbent upon you in relation thereunto.

It is evident to daily experience, that while afflictions are upon us, and while deliverances are fresh, they commonly have some good effect upon us; but as the iron is no sooner out of the fire, but it quickly returns to its old coldness and hardness, so when the affliction or deliverance is past, we usually forget them, count them common things, attribute them to means and second causes: and so the good that mankind should gather from them vanishes, and men grow quickly to be but what they were before they came; their sick-bed promises are forgot, when the sickness is over.

And, therefore, I shall give you an account of your sickness, and of your recovery; and let them never be forgotten by you. As often as those spots and marks in your face are reflected to your view from the glass; as often as this paper comes in your sight; nay, as often as you open your eyes from sleep, which were once closed, and likely never to open again;—

so often, and more often, remember your sickness and your recovery, and the admonitions that this paper lends you from the consideration of both.

First. Therefore, touching your late sickness, I would have you remember these particulars.—1. The disease itself, in its own nature, is now become ordinarily very mortal, especially to those of your age. Look upon even the last year's general bill of mortality; you will find near two thousand, dead of that disease the last year: and had not God been very merciful to you, you might have been one of that number, with as great likelihood as any of them that died of that disease. 2. It was a contagious disease, that secluded the access of your nearest relations. 3. Your sickness surprised you upon a sudden, when you seemed to be in your full strength. 4. Your sickness rendered you noisome to yourself, and all that were about you; and a spectacle full of deformity, by the excess of your disease beyond most that are sick thereof. 5. It was a fierce and violent sickness: it did not only take away the common supplies of nature, as

digestion, sleep, strength, but it took away your memory, your understanding, and the very sense of your own condition, or of what might be conducible to your good. All that you could do, was only to make your condition more desperate, in case they that were about you had not prevented it, and taken more care for you than you did or could for yourself. 6. Your sickness was desperate, insomuch that your symptoms, and the violence of your distemper, were without example; and you were in the very next degree to absolute rottenness, putrefaction, and death itself.

Look upon the foregoing description, and remember that such was your condition. You were as sad a picture of mortality and corruption, as any thing that death itself could make: remember it; and remember also these ensuing instructions, that may make that remembrance profitable and useful to you.—

I. Remember, that "affliction cometh not forth of the dust, nor doth trouble spring out of the ground*;" but this terrible visitation was sent to you from the wise over-ruling

* Job, v. 6.

providence of God: it is he that bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up again. It is true that this disease may seem common; but you may and must know, that there was more than the common hand of God in sending it upon you in such a manner, and such a measure, and at such a season, when you were grown up to a competent age and degree of understanding to make a due use of it, that you might see his justice in afflicting you, and his goodness in delivering you from such a danger.

II. Remember that Almighty God is of most infinite wisdom, justice, and mercy. He hath excellent ends in all his dispensations of his providence. He never sends an affliction, but it brings a message with it: his rod has a voice, a voice commanding us to search and try our ways, and to examine ourselves whether there hath not been some great sin against him, or neglect of duty to him; a voice commanding us to repent of what is amiss, to humble ourselves under his mighty hand, to turn to him that striketh us, to seek to him by prayer for deliverance, to depend upon him by faith in his mercy and power, to amend what

is amiss, to be more watchful, circumspect, and obedient to him in the future course of our lives, to fear to offend him. And if a man hear this voice, God hath his end of mercy and goodness, and man hath the fruit, benefit, and advantage of his affliction, and commonly a comfortable issue of it. Read often and attentively the 33d chapter of Job, from the beginning to the end.

III. Remember how uncertain and frail a creature man is, even in his seeming strongest age and constitution of health; even then, a pestilential air, some evil humour in his blood, some obstruction, it may be, of a little vein or artery, a little meat ill digested, and a thousand small occurrences may, upon a sudden, without any considerable warning, plunge a man into a desperate and mortal sickness, and bring a man to the grave. Remember this terrible sickness seized upon you suddenly, pulled down your strength quickly, and brought you to the very brink of the grave. And though God hath recovered you, you know not how soon you may be brought into the like condition.

IV. Remember, therefore, that you make

and keep your peace with God, and walk in his fear in the days of health, especially after so great a deliverance, and that for very many reasons.—1. You know not whether you may not be overtaken with sudden death, and then it will be impossible for you to begin that work. 2. If you have sickness to give you warning of the approach of death, yet you know not whether that sickness may not suddenly take away your senses, memory, or understanding; whereby you may be disabled to make your peace with God, or to exercise any serious thoughts concerning it. 3. But if that sickness give you fair warning, and take not away your understanding, yet your own experience cannot choose but let you know that pain, and weakness, and distraction of mind, and impatience, and unquietness, are the common attendants of a sick-bed, and render that season at least very difficult then to begin that greatest, and solemnest, and most important business of a man's life. 4. But if your sickness be not so sharp, but that it leaves you patience and attention of mind for that great business, how do you know whether your heart shall be inclined to it? Repentance and

conversion to God is his gift, though it must be our endeavour. And though the merciful God never refuseth a repenting returning offender; yet how can a man that all the time of his health hath neglected Almighty God, refused his invitations, and served his lusts and his sin, expect reasonably that God, in the time of sickness, when the man can serve his sins no longer, will give him the grace of repentance?

—Whatever you do, therefore, be sure you make your peace with God, and keep it in the days of your health, especially after so great a deliverance from so desperate a sickness.

V. Remember that your condition is never so low, but that God hath power to deliver you, and therefore trust in him; but remember withal, that your condition is never so safe and secure, but you are within the reach of his power to bring you down. You are now, by the mercy of God, recovered from a terrible sickness, think not with yourself that your turn is now served, and that you shall have no more need of him, and therefore that you may live as you list, and never regard your duty to him; deceive not yourself herein; remember,

that this sickness, within two or three days, brought you upon your knees, even from a seeming state of health. The case is the same still, nay much worse, if this affliction make you not better. Almighty God called you to love, and serve, and obey him, by the still voice of his word, by the persuasion of your friends, by the advices and reproofs of your father; and when these were not so effectual (as I know you now wish they had been), he sent a messenger that spake louder, that would be heard, even this terrible sickness; and most certainly, if you have heard the voice of this rod (as I am hopeful you have), and thereupon entirely turn to your duty to God in all sincerity and obedience, it is the happiest providence that ever befel you; and you will, upon sound conviction, conclude with the Prophet, "It was good for me that I was afflicted." But, on the other side, if, notwithstanding this voice of the rod, you shall, after your recovery, turn again to folly, and vanity, and excess, and harden yourself against this messenger, know for certain, you are within the reach of the Divine Justice and Power: "And if you walk contrary to him, he will walk

contrary to you, and punish you yet seven times for your sins*." I therefore give you that counsel, that our Lord gave to him that he had healed: "Behold thou art made whole, go thy way and sin no more, lest a worse thing befal thee." There is no contesting with Almighty God: he is ready and easy to be reconciled to the worst of men, upon humiliation and true repentance, but he is not to be mastered or conquered by obstinacy and opposition: "Who hath hardened himself against him and prospered†?"

VI. I would have you remember, that sickness, as well as death, doth undeceive mankind, and shows them where their true wisdom lies. When a young man, especially, is in the full career of his vanity and pleasures, he thinks that religion and the fear of God, and walking according to his Word, and the serious practice of duties of religion towards God, prayer unto him, making our peace with him, are pitiful, low, foolish, and inconsiderable matters; and that those that practise them are a sort of brain-sick, melancholy, unintelligent

* Levit. xxvi. 24. † Job, ix. 4.

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persons, that want wit or breeding, and understand not themselves or the world; that they are mere empty fancies and imaginations, whimsies, Puritanism, and I know not what else: but, on the other side, they think they are the brave men that live splendidly, deny themselves no pleasure, can drink, and roar, and whore, and debauch, and wear the newest fashions. It may be, this gallant or wise man comes to be taken with a fit of sickness, that tells him he must die, death is at the door, his glass is almost out, and but a few sands left in it; and then the man becomes quite of another judgment: he cries out of his former foolishness; he finds his pleasures, and intemperance, and excess, are not only perfect follies, but madness, vexation, torment; and religion and prayer to God, and devotion and peace with God, they are now in request; and now nothing but declamation against those courses, which in his health he valued as the only wisdom; and nothing but promises of amendment, and reformation of life, and devotion to God: so sickness hath undeceived the man, and given him a true and rectified judgment concerning wisdom and folly, quite contrary to

what he had before. Therefore, I would have you to recollect yourself, and (if the violence of your disease left you at any time the use of your reason), bethink yourself what opinion you then had of intemperance, wasting of time, unlawful lust, or any of those sins that formerly pleased you in your health; whether they did not appear to you in your sickness very vain, foolish, vexing things, such as you wished never to have been committed; and, on the other side, what opinion you had in your sickness touching piety towards God, hearing of his Word, calling upon his Name, redeeming of time, modesty, temperance: whether those actions of your life past, that savoured of these, were not comfortable and contenting to you in your sickness; whether your purposes and promises, and resolutions of your sick-bed, were not full of such thoughts as these,—If it please God to recover me, I will never be such a fool as I have been; I will never drink to excess, mispend my time; I will never keep such evil company as I have done; I will be more devout towards God, more obedient to his Word, more observant of good counsel and the like. And, if you find it to be so, I

must desire you to remember, that affliction is the school of wisdom; it rectifies men's judgments: and I must again desire you to keep your judgment right still, and let not the recovery of your health become the loss of your wits; but in your health retain that wisdom your sickness taught you, and practise what you then promised: Remember, he is the wisest man, that provides for his latter end*.

VII. Remember, by your former sickness, how pitiful and inconsiderable a thing the body of man is; how soon is the strength of it turned to faintness and weakness, the beauty of it to ugliness and deformity, the consistency of it to putrefaction and rottenness; and then remember, how foolish a thing it is to be proud of such a carcase; to spend all, or the greatest part of our time in trimming and adorning it; in studying new fashions, and new postures, and new devices to set it out; in spending our time and provisions in pampering it; in pleasing the appetite: and yet this is the chief business of most young men of this age. Learn, therefore, humility and lowli-

* Deut. xxxii. 29.

ness: learn to furnish thy noble and immortal part, thy soul, with religion, grace, knowledge, virtue, goodness; for that will retain it to eternity. How miserable is that man's condition, that whilst sickness hath made his body a deformed, weak, loathsome thing, sin hath made his soul as ugly and deformed. The grave will heal or cover the deformity of the former; but the soul will carry its ulcers and deformity (without repentance) into the next world. Learn and remember, therefore, to have thy greatest care for thy noblest part: furnish it with piety, grace, knowledge, the fear and love of God, faith in Christ. And as for thy body, use it decently, soberly, and comely, that it may be a fit instrument for thy soul to use in this life; but be not proud of it, nor make it thy chiefest care and business to adorn, much less defile it.

VIII. Remember to avoid intemperance and sinful lusts. It is true, sickness and diseases, and finally death, are, by the laws and constitutions of our nature, incident to all mankind; but intemperance, excess of eating and drinking, drunkenness, whoring, uncleanness, and disorder, bring more diseases, es-

pecially upon young men, and destroy more young, strong, healthy men, than the plague, or other natural or accidental distempers: they weaken the brain, corrupt the blood, decay and distemper the spirit, disorder and putrefy the humours, and make the body a very bag full of putrefaction. Some diseases are, as it were, specifical, and appropriate to these vices: other diseases are commonly occasioned by them, by their inflammation and putrefaction of the blood and humours. And all diseases, even those that are epidemical, natural, or casual, yet are rendered by those vices far more sharp, lasting, malignant, and incurable, by that stock of corrupted matter they lodge in the body to feed those diseases, and that impotency that these vices bring upon nature to resist them. Therefore, if you ever expect to have as well a sound body as a sound mind, carefully avoid intemperance and debauchery. The most temperate and sober persons are subject to sickness, weakness, and diseases; but the intemperate can never be long without them.

And thus I have done with the prospect of your disease; and at least many of these

profitable uses you may gather from the remembrance of it.

I shall now, in the second place, put you in remembrance of your deliverance, touching which you must remember.—1. That it was a great, eminent, and extraordinary deliverance: you need no other evidence of it, than by looking back upon the greatness and severity of your disease before mentioned. 2. It was a deliverance by the immediate power and mercy of that God that sent you the visitation.

*Una eademque manus, vulnus opemque tulit.**

If you had been delivered by the immediate efficacy of means, yet you are blind if you see not that the efficacy of means depends upon the providence of God: it is he that provides it, and that makes means effectual. But in this deliverance, God hath pleased to hedge up, as it were, your way from attributing it to means; and hath given you an indication that it was done by his own immediate power, and that he delivered you above and

* The hand that gave the wound, administered the cure.

beyond means. It is true, you had a very able and careful physician, and very great attendance and care was used about you. But when your physician, and all that were about you, began to despair of your recovery; when means proved ineffectual; when the strength of nature was exhausted and baffled by your disease; God Almighty, upon a sudden, and beyond expectation, relieved you, and, as it were, by his own hand, brought you back from the very threshold of the grave. And this he did, that you and all about you, and all your relations, might take notice of it, that it was he that did it.

And thus Almighty God hath exercised towards you two great experiments, the first of his severity, the second of his mercy. And as your sickness and rod had its voice (a loud and sharp voice), so your recovery and deliverance hath its voice also; a sweet, gentle, and (I hope) effectual voice; and I will, as shortly as I can, tell you what it is.—

I. Remember this benefit: remember it was reached out unto you, from the mere power, goodness, and mercy of God. Remember evermore in your heart and soul to be thankful to him for it. Remember, as long as you

live, upon all occasions to acknowledge it: daily to return upon your knees humble thanks for it, to him that had regard to you, and remembered you in your low estate; to him that forgave your iniquities, and healed your disease; to him that did this for you, when all means failed; that did it for you, when you had not the understanding to call upon him for it; to him that did it for you that deserved it not; for you that had provoked him, and neglected him too much in the time of your health. This God it was that thus delivered you. Read often the 103d Psalm attentively, and apply it to your own condition: it will do you good.

II. Remember to acknowledge this goodness of God with all humility. Your deliverance was not the purchase of your own power, nor of your own desert: it was an act of the free and undeserved goodness of God. What Almighty God said by Moses unto the Israelites*, I shall say to you with some variation: Understand, therefore, that the Lord thy God hath not given thee this deliverance for thy righteous-

* Deut. ix. 4, 6.

ness; no, it is the mere effect of his own goodness, and to give you opportunity to praise him, and serve him, better than ever you did before.

III. Remember that although great deliverances require your great acknowledgments, yet there is somewhat more required; namely, a real practical glorifying of God, by ordering your conversation aright, by serving him, pleasing him, obeying him, living to his honour. This Almighty God expects, as well as praises and acknowledgments. As the end of God, in afflictions, is to make men better, so the end of God in deliverances is to make men better; and if we are not the better men by both dispensations, we do, as much as in us lies, disappoint Almighty God in his design, and disappoint ourselves of the benefit and advantage intended in both, and easily to be gained by both. This, therefore, is the voice of this deliverance: it calls sweetly, and gently indeed, but earnestly and effectually for amendment of life; and that upon two great and moving arguments. — 1. Your recovery and great deliverance calls for this from you, upon the account of common ingenuity and good nature,

which obligeth a man to be observant and dutiful to his benefactor. God Almighty is the greatest benefactor, and hath manifested himself such to you, upon a visible and eminent account: this is engagement enough, upon the account of common humanity, to be dutiful and obedient to him. When, therefore, you are at any time, by the temptation of your own corruption, or by the solicitation of evil persons, solicited to evil actions, consider thus with yourself: Is this a becoming return to that God that hath thus wonderfully delivered me? Is this the requital that I shall make to him for his mercy? Shall I please a vain lust, or a vain companion, and displease the great God of heaven and earth, that hath thus delivered me, and done me more good than all the world could ever do me, or than I can ever recompense? 'Do ye thus requite the Lord, O ye foolish people, and unwise? Is not he thy Father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee*?"

IV. This mercy calls for your obedience to

* Deut. xxxii. 6.

God, in an eminent manner, upon the account of common prudence and discretion. The benefit of your obedience to him will be your own, your own happiness in this life, and in that to come. There is no greater moral security against future dangers and troubles, than obedience and reformation of life, upon great deliverances received; nor is there any greater invitation of new troubles and mischiefs, than ingratitude, disobedience, and great sins, after great mercies and deliverances. There is a kind of certain and infallible connection between great sins, (after great mercies received,) and great judgments to follow; *Ingentia beneficia, ingentia peccata, ingentia supplicia**. Again, as I have formerly told you, you do not know how soon you may stand in need of the same mercy and goodness of God, which you have formerly found: you are never out of the reach of his power, and the necessity of his help. Whatever you do, therefore, never disoblige him by whom you live, and whose extraordinary mercy you may stand in need of, you know not how soon. There

* Great benefits—great sins—great punishments.

is nothing in the world doth more provoke God than neglect, forgetfulness, or wilful disobedience after signal mercies. These provoke the merciful God to a severity of the highest kind, because the sweetest and most obliging call of mercy and deliverance is neglected. Read the first chapter of the Proverbs attentively.

And the merciful God hath given us a plain rule and method how he may be served, obeyed, and pleased: he hath given us a plain discovery of his will in the Scriptures of both Testaments. Read that often: you have it by you, and you need not go far to find what is your Maker's will, and what that obedience is that he requires, as the return of this and all other his mercies. Yet I think it not amiss to mind you of some particulars, that may be useful for you upon this occasion, and to direct you how particularly to improve it, and so order your future life in some measure answerable to it.—

1. I would have you make it your first business, after your perfect recovery, to consider the course of your life past, since you

came to the age of discretion, and see what hath been amiss in it: whether you have not neglected religion, and the duties of it, too much; as prayer, hearing the word preached, observing the Lord's-day, receiving the Sacrament: whether you have not been guilty of intemperance, excess of drinking, wantonness, uncleanness, idleness, mispending your time, and those supplies which have been allowed you for your maintenance: whether you have not too much delighted in vain, and sinful, and disorderly company, vanity and expense in apparel. And if any such, or the like faults have been, repent of them, be sorry for them, resolve against them; and let the future course of your life be amended in relation thereunto. I have before told you that your heavenly Father hath forgiven you, and I have forgiven you; neither do I mention these things to upbraid you for them, but that you, upon the consideration of what hath been amiss, may be thereby the better enabled to rectify and set in order your future life. If this be done and practised, I will reckon your late sickness and distemper one of the greatest blessings that ever befel you.

2. I would have you always keep a habit of the fear of God upon your heart. Consider his presence, order your life as in his presence: consider that he always sees you, beholds, and takes notice of you, and especially whether you carry yourself answerable to this great deliverance. It is one of those talents for which he will expect an account from you.

3. I would have you frequently and thankfully consider of the great love of God in Jesus Christ, whom he hath given to be the instructor and governor, and sacrifice for the sins of you and all mankind, through whom, upon repentance, you have assurance of the remission of your sins, and eternal life; and frequently consider, how great an engagement this is upon you, and all mankind, to live according to such a hope and such a mercy.

4. I would have you, every morning, read a portion of the Holy Scriptures, till you have read the Bible from the beginning to the end. Observe it well, read it reverently and attentively, set your heart upon it, and lay it up in your memory, and make it the direction of your life: it will make you a wise and a good

man. I have been acquainted somewhat with men and books, and have had long experience in learning, and in the world: there is no book like the Bible for excellent learning, wisdom, and use; and it is want of understanding in them that think or speak otherwise.

5. Every morning and every evening, upon your knees, with all reverence and attention of mind, return hearty thanks to God for his mercy to you, and particularly for this deliverance: desire his grace to enable you to walk in some measure answerable to it; beg his providence to protect you, his grace to direct you, to keep you from evil actions, and evil persons, and evil occurrences; beg his pardon for your sin, and the continuance of his favour, always concluding with the Lord's Prayer.

6. Observe conscionably the Lord's-day, to keep it holy. Avoid idle company, idle discourse, recreations, and secular employments upon that day. Resort twice that day to the public prayers and sermon: come early to it, be attentive at it, keep your eyes and mind from roving after vain thoughts or objects; and spend the rest of that day, that is free from

necessary occasions, in reading the Scriptures, or some good books of divinity.

7. Once every term at least, come preparedly and reverently to the Holy Communion; receive it with great reverence and thankfulness, and due consideration of the end of its institution. Renew your covenant with Almighty God that you made in baptism, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly before him; and beg his grace and strength to perform it.

And as those directions before do more specially relate to Almighty God, and your deportment immediately towards him, so these that follow more especially relate to yourself and others, and your moral conversation: therefore,—

8. Be very moderate in eating and drinking. Drunkenness is the great vice of the time; and by drunkenness I do mean, not only gross drunkenness, but also tippling, drinking excessively, and immoderately, or more than is convenient or necessary: avoid those companies that are given to it; come not into those places that are devoted to that beastly vice, namely, taverns and ale-houses;

avoid and refuse those devices that are used to occasion it, as drinking and pledging of healths; be resolute against it, and when your resolution is once known, you will never be solicited to it. The Rachabites were commanded by their father not to drink wine; and they obeyed it, and had a blessing for it. My command to you is not so strict; I allow you the moderate use of wine and strong drink at your meals: I only forbid you the excess, or unnecessary use of it, and those places and companies, and artifices, that are temptations to it.

9. Avoid wanton and lascivious actions, speeches, and company. Read Proverbs, ii. 5, 6, 7, 9. A whore hunts for the precious life of a man; and that vice brings a ruin with it to the body, soul, and estate. If you cannot conveniently contain yourself in a single life, and be of competent health, marry; but with the advice and counsel of your father, while he lives.

10. Be frugal of your time (it is one of the best jewels we have), and to that end avoid idleness: it consumes your time, and lays you open to worse inconveniences. Let your re-

creations be healthy, and creditable, and moderate, without too much expense of time or money. Go not to stage-plays, they are a most profuse wasting of time. Value time by that estimate we would have of it, when we want it: what would not a sick man give for those portions of time of health, that he had formerly improvidently wasted.

11. Be diligent in your study and calling; it is an act of duty to Almighty God that requires it, and it will be your wisdom and benefit: it will be a good expense of time, a prevention from a thousand inconveniences and temptations that otherwise will befal a man: it will furnish you with knowledge and understanding, give you the advantage and means of a comfortable and plentiful subsistence, and make you a support, comfort, and benefit to your friends and country.

12. Be frugal in your expenses: live within the compass of that exhibition that God's providence, and your father's abilities, shall supply you withal: it is enough to maintain an honest provident man, and ten times more will not be enough for a profuse mind. A frugal man will live comfortably and plentifully upon

a little; and a profuse man will live beggarly, necessitously, and in continual want, whatever his supplies be.

13. In all your expenses consider beforehand,—Can I not be well enough without this that I am about to buy? Is there an absolute necessity of it? Can I not forbear till I am in a better condition to compass it? If I buy or borrow, can I pay? and when? and am I sure? Will this expense hold out? How shall I bring about the next quarter, or the next year?—If young men would but have the patience to consider and ask themselves questions of the like nature, it would make them considerate in their expenses, and provident for the future; and these considerations will, in a special manner, concern you in respect of your father's great expenses for you, which, though I have forgiven and forgotten, I would have you remember with gratitude and caution.

14. The vanity of young men in loving fine clothes and new fashions, and valuing themselves by them, is one of the most childish pieces of folly that can be, and the occasion of great profuseness and undoing of young men. Avoid curiosity and too much expensiveness in

your apparel: let your apparel be comely, plain, decent, cleanly, not curious or costly: it is the sign of a weak head-piece to be sick for every new fashion, or to think himself the better in it, or the worse without it.

15. Be careful what company you consort with; and much more careful what persons you grow intimate with. Choose sober, wise, learned, honest, religious company: you will gain learning and wisdom, and improve yourself in virtue and goodness, by conversing with them. But avoid debauched, foolish, intemperate, prodigal, atheistical, profane company, as you would avoid a plague: they will corrupt and undo you; they are a sort of the most pitiful fools in the world; and familiar acquaintance and conversation with them will endanger to make you like them.

16. Weigh and consider your words, before you speak them; and do not talk at random, or at a venture. Let your words be few, and to the purpose. Be more ready to hear others than to speak yourself. Accustom yourself to speak leisurely and deliberately: it will be a means to make you speak warily and considerately.

17. Be very careful to speak truth; and beware of lying. As lying is displeasing to God, so it is offensive to man; and always at the latter end returns to the reproach or disadvantage of him that useth it: it is an evidence of a weak and unmanly mind. Be careful that you believe not hastily strange news, and strange stories; and be much more careful that you do not report them, though at the second hand; for if it prove an untruth, (as commonly strange stories prove so), it brings an imputation of levity upon him that reports it, and possibly some disadvantage to others.

18. Take heed what you promise: see that it be just, and honest, and lawful, and what is in your power honestly and certainly to perform; and when you have so promised, be true to your word. It is for the most part the fashion of inconsiderate and young men, (especially that run in debt) they will with great asseverations promise precise payment, at this or that day, when either they certainly know they cannot perform, or at least have no probable assurance that they can do it; and when their turn is served, they are as backward in performance, as they were before liberal in

their promises. Breach of promises and lying are much of a nature, and commonly go together, and are arguments of an impotent and unmanly mind.

19. Beware of gaming. It is the suddenest consumption of an estate that can be; and that vice seldom goes alone: commonly debauchery of all kinds accompanies it. Besides, it makes a man of a wild, vast, and unsettled mind; and such men are impatient of an honest calling, or of moderate or honest gain.

20. Run not into debt either for wares sold, or money borrowed: be content to want things that are not of absolute necessity, rather than to run upon the score: such a man pays at the latter end a third part more than the principal comes to, and is in perpetual servitude to his creditors; lives uncomfortably; is necessitated to increase his debts to stop his creditors' mouths; and many times falls into desperate courses.

21. Be respectful to all, familiar and intimate with few: be grateful to your benefactors, especially to those who, under God, were instrumental for your good in your late sick-

ness, and return your thanks to them; to your father that spared no cost for your recovery; to your doctor, that was exceedingly diligent about you; to those that attended you in your sickness; to those that, together with your father, often prayed to God for your recovery, and for a blessing upon this affliction, — whose names you shall in due time particularly know; but, above all, to Almighty God, who not only provided and blessed the means, but saved and delivered you above means, and when means failed.

22. Lastly, I shall conclude with one advice more, without the observance whereof my labour in writing this long epistle will be probably fruitless: be not wise in your own conceit. This is the unhappy error, and many times the ruin of young men especially: they are usually rash, giddy, and inconsiderate, and yet extremely confident of that which they have least reason to trust, namely, their own understanding, which renders them most reserved from them that are willing and best able to advise them, impatient of reproof, love to be flattered, and so become incapable of good and wise counsel, till their follies have reduced

them to extreme straits and inconveniences. Suspect therefore your own judgment: advise often with your father, especially in all things of moment: be glad of his counsel, and be contented and willing to follow it, and to guide your life according to it; at least till ripeness of age, observation, and experience, have enabled you better to advise yourself. This is an easy, and ready and cheap way of attaining wisdom, and of avoiding infinite inconveniences.

And thus I have, in this long epistle, given you the means how you may improve both your sickness, and recovery, to the glory of God, and your own benefit.

I shall therefore conclude with two considerations, that may the more engage you to this use of both these dispensations.

I. The danger is great, if afflictions make not a man more humble and dutiful: and the danger is yet greater, if great deliverances and mercies do not make a man more thankful and obedient to God; because it is the most obliging method that the gracious God can use towards the children of men, for that end, in this life;

and the neglect of that invitation adds ingratitude and contempt to the neglect of it.

II. The benefit that you will receive by making a good use of these two dispensations, in improving your dutifulness and obedience to God, will be singular and excellent. 1. It will make you a wise man, by making you a good and religious man. Believe it from your father, who will not deceive you; nay, believe it from a greater than your father, the very Spirit of truth, who cannot deceive you:— the true fear of God, is the only true wisdom. Read Deut. iv. 6. Job, xxviii. 28. Psalm cxi. 10. Prov. i. 7. Prov. ix. 10. Eccles. xii. 13; and very many more declarations there are of this great truth. 2. It will make you a happy man: it will give you the favour and love of God, which is better than life itself. You shall have his mercy to pardon you, his providence to protect you, his wisdom to direct you, his goodness to bless you, and to forgive and forget whatsoever hath heretofore been done amiss by you: this will make all conditions comfortable to you, whether life or death, sickness or health. By this means you may be a comfort to your father, a support to your

brothers and sisters, an instrument of good to your country, and attain an honest, creditable, and competent subsistence in this world, and an everlasting inheritance of glory and immortality in the world to come. Thus I have given you a large letter of sound and good counsel: set your heart to it, and observe and remember it. We see how unstable our lives are! You nor I know how soon either or both of us may leave this world: it may be, this may be the last paper of advice that your father may give you. But however it shall please God to deal with you or me, touching our continuance in this world, yet let me leave this with you, in the close of this letter: — If I shall find that these directions are dutifully observed, I shall be ready, from time to time, freely to advise and direct you; and as I have passed by your former extravagancies, so I shall thereby have great assurance that God hath blessed this visitation to you: but, on the other side, if I shall find that you neglect my counsels, that you make light of them, that you still pursue those courses that will certainly be bitterness in the end, I must then tell you, I shall pray for you, and be sorry for you

with my heart; but I shall not easily be persuaded to give any more advice or counsels, where I find them despised or neglected. In this paper there are many things omitted, which might have been inserted; but the constant reading of the Holy Scriptures will supply unto you that defect: I have chosen only in this paper to mention such things which are seasonable for you upon this occasion. God Almighty hath not been wanting to you in admonition, correction, mercy, and deliverance; neither hath your father been wanting to you in education, counsel, care, and expense: I pray God Almighty bless all unto you. This is the prayer of

Your loving father,

MATTHEW HALE.

THE GREAT AUDIT:

WITH THE

ACCOUNT OF THE GOOD STEWARD.

The great Lord of the world hath placed the children of men in this earth as his Stewards; and according to the parable in Matthew xxv., he delivers to every person his Talents, a stock of advantages or opportunities. To some he commits more; to some, less; to all, some.

This stock is committed to every person under a Trust, or charge, to employ the same in ways, and to ends, and in proportion, suitable to the talents thus committed to them, and to the measure and quality of them.

The Ends of this deputing of the children of men to this kind of employment of their talents are divers: 1. That they may be kept in continual action and motion, suitable to

the condition of reasonable creatures, as almost every thing else in the world is continued in motion suitable to its own nature, which is the subject of the wise man's discourse; "All things are full of labour*." 2. That in that regular motion they may attain ends of advantage to themselves; for all things are so ordered by the most wise God, that every being hath its own proportionable perfection and happiness, inseparably annexed to that way and work which his providence hath destined it unto. 3. That in that due and regular employment, each man might be in some measure serviceable and advantageous to another. 4. That although the great Lord of this family can receive no advantage by the service of his creature, because he is perfect and all-sufficient in himself; yet he receives glory and praise by it, and a complacency in beholding a conformity in the creature, to his own most perfect will.

To the due execution of this trust committed to the children of men, and for their encouragement in it, he hath annexed a Re-

* Eccles. i. 8.

ward by his promise, and the free appointment of his own good pleasure. This reward therefore is not meritoriously due to the employment of the talent; for as the talent is the Lord's, so is the strength and ability whereby it is employed; but by his own good pleasure and free promise the reward is knit to the work. In this case, therefore, the reward is not demandable, so much upon the account of the Divine justice, as upon the account of the Divine truth and fidelity. On the other side, to the mal-administration of this trust, there is annexed a retribution of Punishment; and this most naturally and meritoriously: for the law of common justice and reason doth most justly subject the creature, that depends in his being upon his Creator, to the law and will of the Creator; and, therefore, having received a talent from his Lord, and together with his being, an ability to employ it according to the will of his Lord, a non-employment or mis-employment thereof doth most justly oblige him to guilt and punishment, as the natural and just consequent of his demerit.

Of the Persons that do receive these talents, some do employ them well, though in various

degrees; some to more advantage, some to less: and although the best husbands come short of what they should do, and at best are in this respect unprofitable servants, yet if there be a faithful, conscientious, and sincere endeavour to employ that talent to their master's honour, they are accounted good Stewards; and the merits of Christ supply by faith that wherein they come short.

On the other side, some persons are unfaithful Stewards of their talents; and these are of three kinds: 1. Such as wholly misemploy their talents, turning them to the dishonour and disservice of their Lord, which they should have employed to his service; and these have a double account to make, viz. of their Talents, and of their Mis-employment. 2. Such as do not at all employ their talent; but as they do no harm, so they do no good with it: these are negligent Servants, and have the single, but full account of their Talents to make. 3. Such as do make some use of their Talents, but do not produce an increase proportionable to their stock: and so, though they are not debtors for their whole Talents, yet are in arrear and grown behind-hand; and

so upon the foot of their account are found debtors to their Lord; which, without faith in Christ, and his merits coming in to make up the sum, will be enough to cast them in prison, and there keep them to eternity.

And according to these varieties of degrees, of good or bad administration, are the degrees of Reward or Punishment. He that hath administered his trust well, so that there is a great access of his improvement, hath a greater access of glory; and he that hath less surplusage upon his account, shall have the less degree of glory: and on the other side, he that hath many talents, and made no improvement, his debt and punishment shall be the greater; he that hath fewer talents, his non-improvement leaves him a debtor in a less sum, and consequently subject to a less punishment.

The great Day of Account will be the great Day of Judgment, when the Lord of the families of the whole earth will call every man to his account of his stewardship here on earth: wherein we may with reverence, and for the better fastening it upon our affections, suppose the Lord thus to be speaking to all, and every particular person in the world.

THE CHARGE.

"Come, ye children of men, as I have formerly made you stewards of my blessings upon earth, and committed to every one of you, that come to the use of your understanding, several talents to employ and improve to the honour and service of me, your Lord and Master, so now I come to call you to render an account of your stewardship; and because you shall see the particular charge of your several receipts, whereunto you may give your answers, behold here is a schedule of the particulars with which I will charge you. Give in your particular answer how you have employed and improved them, and see you do it truly; for know, I have a control and check upon you: a control within you, your own consciences; and a control without you, my book of remembrance, wherein all your receipts, disbursements, and employments are registered.

"First, I have given unto you all your Senses; and principally those two great senses of discipline, your Sight, and your Hearing.

Item. I have given unto you all, Understanding and Reason, to be a guide of your

actions; and to some of you, more eminent degrees thereof.

" *Item.* I have given you all Memory, a treasury of things past, heard, and observed.

" *Item.* I have given you a Conscience to direct you, and to check you in your miscarriages, and to encourage you in well-doing; and I have furnished that conscience of yours with light, and principles of truth and practice, conformable to my will.

" *Item.* I have laid open, to all your view, the Works of my Power and Providence, the heavens and the earth, the conspicuous administration of my wisdom and power in them.

" *Item.* I have delivered over to your view my more special Providences over the children of men, — the dispensation of rewards and punishments, according to eminent deserts or demerits.

" *Item.* I have given you the advantage of Speech, whereby to communicate your minds one to another, and to instruct and advantage one another by the help thereof.

" *Item.* I have given you Time of life in this world; to some longer, to some shorter, to all a time of life, a season wherein you might

exercise those other talents I have intrusted you withal.

" *Item.* I have delivered over unto you the rule and Dominion over my Creatures, allowing you the use of them for your food, raiment, and other conveniences.

" *Item.* Besides these common talents I have intrusted you withal, I have delivered over to *you,* and to *you,* &c. divers special and eminent Talents above others, viz. of the Mind, or such as concern you as intellectual creatures.

1. " Great Learning and Knowledge in the works of nature, Arts and Sciences, great Prudence and wisdom in the conduct of affairs, [Elocution,] excellent Education.

2. " Of the Body: a firm and healthy constitution, Strength, Beauty, and Comeliness.

3. " Of externals: Great affluence of Wealth and Riches; eminence of Place, and Power, and Honour: great Reputation and Esteem in the world; great Success in enterprises and undertakings, public and private; relations economical.

1. " Of things of a mixt nature: Christian and liberal Education; counsel and advice of

faithful and judicious Friends; good Laws in the place and country where you live: the written Word of God acquainting you with my will, and the way to eternal life; the Word preached by able and powerful Ministers thereof; the Sacraments, both for your imitation and confirmation; special and powerful motions and impulses of my Spirit upon your consciences, dissuading from sin, and encouraging in and to holiness; special Providences, abstracting and diverting you from the commission of things contrary to my will, dishonourable to my name, and hurtful to yourselves; Chastisement and Corrections, eminently and plainly inflicted for sin committed by yourselves and others, so that the guilt was legible in the punishment; eminent Blessings upon the ways of holiness and virtue, even to the view of the world; eminent Restitution and Deliverances, upon repentance and amendment of life; most clear and sensible Experiences of my love, favour, and listening to your prayers, to encourage you to a dependence upon me; singular Opportunities put into your hands, of instructing the ignorant, delivering the oppressed, promoting my honour.

"These are some of the many talents which I have committed to you, though in differing degrees: Give up your accounts, you children of men, how you have employed them."

THE ACCOUNT OF

THE GOOD STEWARD:

LORD, before I enter into account with thy Majesty, I must confess, that if thou shouldst enter into judgment with me, and demand that account which in justice thou mayst require of me, I should be found thy debtor. I confess I have not improved my talents according to that measure of ability that thou hast lent me. I therefore most humbly offer unto thee the redundant merit of thy own Son, to supply my defects, and to make good what is wanting in my account; yet, according to thy command, I do humbly render my discharge of the trust thou hast committed to me, as followeth:

I.

IN GENERAL.

As to all the Blessings and Talents wherewith thou hast intrusted me:—

I have looked up to Thee with a thankful heart, as the only author and giver of them.

I have looked upon myself as unworthy of them.

I have looked upon them as committed to my trust and stewardship, to manage them for the ends that they were given,—the honour of my Lord and Master.

I have therefore been watchful and sober in the use and exercise of them, lest I should be unfaithful in them.

If I have at any time, through weakness or inadvertence, or temptation, mis-employed any of them, I have been restless, till I have in some measure rectified my miscarriage by repentance and amendment.

II.

IN PARTICULAR.

Concerning my Senses, and the use of them:—

I have made a covenant with mine Eyes, that they should not rove after vanity, or forbidden objects: I have employed them in beholding thy works of wonder and wisdom.

I have busied them in reading those books

and writings, that may instruct me in the great concernments of eternal life.

I have stopt my Ears against sinful and unprofitable discourse, and against slandering, and lying, and flattering tongues.

I have exercised them in listening to those things that might increase my faith, knowledge and piety.

I have kept them open to the cry of the poor and oppressed, to relieve them. The rest of the employments of these and my other Senses, have been for my necessary preservation, and the honest exercise of an honest calling and conversation.

III.

AS TO THE REASON AND UNDERSTANDING THOU HAST GIVEN ME.

I have been careful to govern my senses and sensual appetite by my reason, and to govern my reason by thy word.

I have endeavoured to use and employ it, but not lean or depend upon it: I make it my assistant, but not my idol.

I have been careful to wind up my reason and understanding to the highest key in the

searching out of truths, but especially those that are of the greatest concernment in matters of faith. I have made my understanding laborious and industrious, but still under yoke and rule of thy word, lest should grow extravagant and petulant.

I have looked upon my understanding and reason, as a ray of thy Divine light; and therefore I have used it for Thee; and have counted it a most high sacrilege, ingratitude, and rebellion, to employ it against thee, thy honour, or service.

I have endeavoured principally to furnish it with that knowledge, which will be of use in the other world. This hath been my business; other studies, or acquests of other knowledge, have been either for the necessary use of this life, or harmless divertisements or recreations. In the exercise of my reason, as on the one side I have avoided idleness, supineness, or neglect, so on the other side I have not employed it in vain, curious, unprofitable, forbidden, inquiries. I have studied to use it with sobriety, moderation, humility, and thankfulness. And as I have been careful to employ it, so I have been as careful not to mis-employ it: I looked

upon it as thy talent, and therefore gave unto
ees: to thee the glory, the use and service of it.
how

IV.

AS TO THE MEMORY THOU HAST LENT ME.

On the contemplation of that strange and wonderful faculty, that distinctly, and notwithstanding the intervention of thousands of objects, retains their images and representations, with all their circumstances and consequents, I have admired the wonderful wisdom, power, and perfection of the Lord.

I have endeavoured principally to treasure up in it those things that may be most of use for the life to come, and most conducible to the attaining of it; thy mercies, commands, directions, promises; my own vows, resolutions, experiences, failings; to keep me constant in my duty, dependent upon thy goodness, humble and penitent.

Some things I have studied to forget; injuries, vain and hurtful discourses, and such things, as either would make me the worse by remembering them, or take up too much room in my memory, which might be employed and stored with better furniture.

The rest of the employment of my memory hath been, to assist me in the ordinary and necessary conversation with others, the ways of my calling, the performing of my promises and undertakings, the preservation of good and lawful learning, that thereby I might do service to Thy name, serve my generation, and improve myself in knowledge, wisdom and understanding.

V.

AS TOUCHING MY CONSCIENCE, AND THE LIGHT THOU HAST GIVEN ME IN IT.

It hath been my care to improve that natural light, and to furnish it with the best principles I could. Before I had the knowledge of thy Word, I got as much furniture as I could from the writings of the best moralists, and the examples of the best men; after I had the light of thy Word, I furnished it with those most pure and unerring principles that I found in it.

I have been very diligent to keep my conscience clean; to encourage it in the vicegerency that thou hast given it over my soul and actings: I have kept it in the throne,

and greatest reverence and authority, in my heart.

In actions to be done or omitted, I have always advised with it, and taken its advice: I have neither stifled, nor forced, nor bribed it; but gave it a free liberty to advise and speak out, and a free subjection of my will, purposes, and actions to it.

If, through inadvertency of mind, or importunity of temptations, or precipitancy of occasion, or necessity of the times, I have at any time done amiss, I have not taken her up short, or stopped her mouth, or my own attention to her chiding and reproof; but I have, with much submission of mind, borne her chastisement, and improved it to an humbling of myself before thee for my failings: for I looked upon her as acting by thy authority, for thy service, and to thy glory; and I durst not discourage, discountenance, or disobey her.

When she was pleased, and gave me good words, I was glad; for I esteemed her as a glass, that represented to my soul the favour or displeasure of God himself, and how he stood affected towards me.

I have more trembled under the fear of a

seared or discouraged conscience, than under the fear of a sharp or scrupulous conscience; because I always counted the latter, though more troublesome, yet more safe.

I have been very jealous either of wounding, or grieving, or discouraging, or deadening my conscience. I have therefore chosen rather to forbear that which seemed but indifferent, lest there should be somewhat in it that might be unlawful; and would rather gratify my conscience with being too scrupulous, than displease, disquiet, or flat it by being too venturous: I have still chosen rather to forbear what might be probably lawful, than to do that which might be possibly unlawful; because I could not err in the former, I might in the latter. If things were disputable whether they might be done, I rather chose to forbear, because the lawfulness of my forbearance was unquestionable.

As I have been careful to advise impartially with my conscience, before my actions, so lest either through inadvertence, precipitancy, incogitancy, or sudden emergencies, I had committed any thing amiss, either in the nature or manner of the action, I commonly, every

night, brought my actions of the day past, before the judicatory of my conscience, and left her to a free and impartial censure of them; and what she sentenced well done, I with humility returned the praise thereof to Thy name: what she sentenced done amiss, I did humbly sue unto thee for pardon, and for grace to prevent me from the like miscarriages. By this means I kept my conscience active, renewed and preserved my peace with thee, and learned vigilance and caution for the time to come.

VI.

AS TOUCHING THY GREAT WORKS OF CREATION AND PROVIDENCE.

I have not looked upon thy works inconsiderately and commonly, and passed them over as common and ordinary things, as men usually do upon things of common and ordinary occurrence; but I have searched into them as things of great eminence and wonder, and have esteemed it a great part of my duty, that the wise God of nature requires of the children of men, who therefore exposed these his great works to our view, and gave us eyes to behold, and reason in some measure to observe and

understand them: and therefore I have strictly observed the frame of the world, the motion, order, and Divine economy of them. I have searched into their qualities, causes, and operations; and have discovered as great, if not greater, matter of admiration therein, than in the external beauty and prospect, that at the first view they presented to my sense.

And this disquisition, and observation, did not rest only in the bare perusal of the works themselves, or their immediate natural causes, upon which they depended; but I traced their being, dependence, and government, unto thee, the First Cause; and by this prosecution and tracing of things to their original, I was led up to a most demonstrative conviction, That there is a God that is the first cause of their being, and motion. And in the contemplation of the admirable vastness of the works mine eyes behold, their singular beauty and order, the admirable usefulness, convenience, and adaptation of one thing to another, the constancy, regularity, and order of the motion of the heavens and heavenly bodies, the mutual subserviency of one thing to another, the order and useful position of the elements, the fertility

of the earth, the variety of beauty and usefulness of the creatures, their admirable instincts, the wonderful fabric of the body of man, the admirableness and usefulness of his faculties animal, and the singular adaptation of the organs to those faculties, the strong powers of the reasonable soul, — in the contemplation of these, and such as these varieties, I did, to the everlasting silencing of the atheism that my own corruptions were apt to nourish, conclude, That there is but one God, that he is most powerful, most wise, knowing all things, governing all things, supporting all things. Upon these convictions, I was strengthened in the belief of thy Holy Word, which had so great a congruity with these truths, that the strict and due contemplation of thy creatures did so demonstratively evince.

And upon these convictions, I did learn the more to honour, reverence, and admire Thee, and to worship, serve, and obey Thee, to depend and rest upon Thee, to walk humbly and sincerely, and awfully before Thee, as being present with me, and beholding me; to love and adore Thee as the fountain of all being and good. When I looked upon the glory and

usefulness of the sun, I admired the God that made it, chalked out its motions for it, placed it in that due distance from the earth, for its use and conveniency. When I looked upon the stars, those huge and wonderful balls of light, placed in that immense distance from the inferior bodies, and one from another, their multitude and motion, I admired the wisdom and power of that God, whose hand spans the heavens, and hath fixed every thing in its place. Nay, when I looked upon the poor little herbs that arise out of the earth, the lowest of vegetables; and considered the secret spark of life that is in it, that attracts, increaseth, groweth, seminateth, preserves itself, and its kinds; the various virtues that are in them for the food, medicine, and delight of more perfect creatures; my mind was carried up to the admiration, and adoration, and praise of that God, whose wisdom, power, and influence, and government is seen in these little small footsteps of his goodness: so that take all the wisest, ablest, most powerful, and knowing men under heaven, they cannot equal that power and wisdom of thine, that is seen in a blade of grass; nor so much as trace out, or

clearly or distinctly decipher, the great varieties in the production, growth, and process of its short, yet wonderful continuance; insomuch that there is scarce any thing that we converse withal, but yielded me inscriptions of the power and wisdom of their Maker written upon them.

In the contemplation of thy great works of the Heavens, those goodly, beautiful, and numerous bodies, so full of glory and light, I ever reflected upon myself with *David's* meditation, "Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him; or the son of man, that thou regardest him!" It is true, man in himself considered, is a creature full of wonder; but compared with these goodly creatures, he is but an inconsiderable thing. I learnt by thy creatures to be humble, and adore thy condescension, that art pleased from Heaven, the dwelling-place of thy Majesty and Glory, to take care of such a worm as man, sinful man.

In the contemplation of thy Power and Wisdom in creating and governing the world, I have learned submission to thy will; as being the will of the same most wise God,

that by his wisdom hath created and governs all things; and therefore his will, a most wise, perfect will. I have learned to depend upon thy Providence; who, though I am but a worm, in comparison with thy heavenly works, yet am an excellent and eminent creature, in comparison of the ravens and the grass of the fields; yet those he feeds, and these he clothes, and shall he not much more clothe and feed me? Thus I have in some measure improved the talents of thy works, thereby to find and trace out thy majesty, thy power, wisdom, and greatness, and my own duty.

VII.

TOUCHING THY MORE SPECIAL PROVIDENCES TOWARDS THE CHILDREN OF MEN.

As by the works of nature, I have learned what thou art, and something of my duty thereupon to thee; so by thy providence towards the children of men, I have in some measure learned the same, and a farther lesson: viz. What thy Will is; for thou hast not left thyself without a witness thereof to a mere natural man, observing thy providence towards the children of men.—I have observed some

men of eminent justice and uprightness of life, purity and sanctimony, temperance and sobriety, mercy and gentleness, patience and forbearance, bounty and liberality; and I have observed them to be very happy men, and blessed in what was most desired by them. It may be they were rich and great; but if they were not, it was because riches and greatness was not the thing they most valued: perchance it might have been a burden to them to be such. But I have always observed them to be happy in what they most desired and valued: they had serenity and quietness of mind. If they were not rich, yet they were visibly happy in their contentedness; and if they were not great, yet they were apparently honourable in the esteem and value of others: nay, if they were under external losses, crosses, reproaches, yet in the midst thereof, it was most apparent to all men they enjoyed that which they more valued, a most composed, cheerful, patient, contented soul. And this hath been apparently as visible to all spectators, as if they had enjoyed a full confluence of external happiness; and very many times, unless upon eminent and visible reasons, before the end of their days,

they had signal returns of eternal enjoyments. I have observed men of notorious and wicked lives, traitors, murderers, oppressors, adulterers, covenant-breakers, and other villanies, secured by eminent power, policy, or secrecy; yet by wonderful providence that power broken, that policy disappointed, that secrecy discovered, and eminent judgments, answerable to their eminent demerits, have overtaken them. I have seen and observed, both in myself and others, our sins and offences so suitably, and proportionably answered with punishments, that though they seem to be produced by strange and most casual conjectures, yet so exactly conformable to the nature, quality, and degree of the offence, that they carried in them the very effigies of the sins, and made it legible in the punishment, *sic ille manus, sic ora gerebat.* And from these observations I found that those sins were displeasing to thee; that thou wert most wise to discover, and most just and powerful to punish them; and did thereupon conclude, *Verily, there is a reward for the righteous; verily, he is a God that judgeth in the earth.*

VIII.

CONCERNING MY SPEECH.

I have always been careful that I offend not with my tongue. My words have been few, unless necessity or thy honour required more speech than ordinary. My words have been true, representing things as they were; and sincere, bearing conformity to my heart and mind. My words have been seasonable, suitable to the occasion, and seasoned with grace and usefulness.

I have esteemed my words, though transient and passing away, yet treasured up in thy remembrance; for by my words I shall be justified, by my words condemned: and therefore I have reflected often upon my words; and when I have found any thing, through inadvertency or passion, hath passed from me, I have endeavoured to reform it, and humbled myself before thee for it.

I have esteemed it the most natural and excellent use of my tongue, to set forth thy glory, goodness, power, wisdom, and truth; to instruct others as I had opportunity in the

knowledge of thee, in their duty to thee, to themselves, and others; to reprove vice and sin; to encourage virtue and good living; to convince errors, to maintain the truth; to call upon thy name, and by vocal prayers to sanctify my tongue, and to fix my thoughts to the duty about which I was; to persuade to peace, and charity, and good works: and in these employments I endeavoured to wind up my tongue to the highest degree of elocution that I was capable of.

I have often contemplated thy wonderful wisdom and goodness to the children of men, in giving them not only reason and understanding, but that admirable faculty of speech, whereby one man might communicate his mind, and thoughts, and wants, and desires, and counsels, and assistance, to others; the great engine of upholding of mutual society; and without which our reason and understanding were imprisoned within ourselves, and confusion would ensue, as once it did at the confusion of tongues, by the most wise providence for most excellent ends.

In sum, I have looked upon this, amongst the many other conveniencies I enjoy, as a

treasure committed to my trust for my Master's use: I have accordingly employed it conscionably, seemly, and humbly, as thy gift, not my own acquest.

IX.

TOUCHING MY TIME OF LIFE.

First, I have duly considered what it is, and for what end thou gavest it me: that it is but a short time, and the minutes that are passed, and the opportunities in them, are irrevocably and irrecoverably lost; that all the wealth of the world cannot redeem it; that the time that is before me, is uncertain. When I look upon an hour-glass, or the shadow of a dial, I can guess that here is half an hour, or a quarter, or more, or less to come; but I cannot guess what proportion of time remains in the hour-glass of my life: only I know it is short; but I know not how short it is, whether a year, or a week, or a day, or an hour; and yet upon this little uncertain portion of time, and the due use of it, depends my everlasting happiness or misery. It is my seed-time, and if I sow not my seed here, it is too late to think of that husbandry after death; and if I sow, and sow not good

seed, my crop will be thereafter, in that other world, that immediately expects upon the issue of this; and I have a thousand diversions that rob me of much of this little portion of time, and yield me no account in order to my great concernment. When I cast out, from the account of my time, the unprofitableness of my childhood and youth, the hours spent in sleeping, eating, drinking, recreations, travels, and other things that carry no sin in them, there remains but a small portion of a short life for concernments of everlasting importance; a great business to be done, great difficulties and impediments in the doing of it, and but a little portion of time, of a short and uncertain life, to do it in. And yet this life of mine was by Thee given, not to be trifled and squandered away, either in sin or idleness; not to gain riches, honour, or reputation; for when sickness comes, these will appear insipid and vain things; and when death comes, they will be merely useless: but it was for a higher end, viz. a time to trade for the most valuable jewel of eternal happiness; a time to sow such seed as might yield a crop of blessedness in the next world; a time to secure a title to an everlasting

inheritance; such a time, as if once lost, the opportunity is lost for ever; lost irrecoverably; for the night cometh wherein no man can work; "For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest*."

And upon this consideration of the great end of my life, the great importance of the business that is to be done in it, the brevity and great uncertainty of this life, and the utter impossibility after death to redeem the neglect of the proper and important business of my life, I have endeavoured to husband this short, uncertain, important talent as well as I can.

1. By a careful avoiding of *sinful* Employments, which at once do waste this precious talent, and contract a farther debt upon me: it renders me in arrears for the time mispent, and the guilt contracted.

2. By avoiding Idleness, burning out my candle to no purpose.

3. By avoiding *unnecessary* consumption of Time, by long feastings, excessive sleep, impertinent visits, seeing of interludes, unne-

* Eccles. ix. 10.

cessary recreations, curious and impertinent studies and inquiries, that, when attained, serve to no purpose.

4. By applying, directing and ordering even my studies of human learning, histories, natural or moral philosophy, mathematics, languages, laws, to an end beyond themselves: viz. thereby to enable me to understand, and observe thy excellent wisdom and power; to maintain and uphold thy cause against atheism, idolatry, and errors; to fit me for serving of thee and my country, in the station wherein I live.

5. By exercising myself in the very business of my Calling, as an act of duty and obedience to thee; acting in it those virtues of Christianity that might be honourable to thy name, and a good example to others, of improvement of grace unto myself; using in it diligence without anxiety, dependence upon thee without presumption, contentedness, patience, thankfulness, honesty, justice, uprightness, plain-dealing, liberality: and by this means translating my secular employment into an exercise of Christian duty; serving thee while I served myself; and converting that very employment and the time spent therein, to the use,

honour, and advantage of my Lord and Master, the good example of others, and the increase of my spiritual advantage, as well as my temporal.

6. By religiously observing those times that have been set apart to *religious* duties, especially the Lord's Day; not mingling with it secular thoughts or employments; but with much attention, strictness, and care, laying hold upon those times and opportunities, and carefully applying them singly to the proper business or the times.

7. By dedicating and setting apart some portion of my time to Prayer, and reading of thy Word, which I have constantly and peremptorily observed, whatever occasions interposed, or importunity persuaded to the contrary.

8. By making the *magnum oportet*, the great and one thing necessary, the choice and principal Business of my Life, and the great design of it; and esteeming that time spent most naturally, profitably, and suitably, that was spent in order to it; observing thy great works of wisdom and power; contemplating upon thy goodness and excellency; hearing and reading thy word; calling upon thy Name; crucifying my corruptions; exercising thy graces;

humbling myself for my sins; returning thanks for thy mercies; studying the mystery of God manifest in the flesh; striving to bring myself conformable to my Pattern, and to have him formed in my heart, and his life in mine; crucifying myself to the world, and the world to me; fitting myself for death, judgment, and eternity. These, and the like employments, I esteemed the flower, the glory, the best of my spent time, because they will be carried over with advantage into the life to come; and therefore this I reckoned my business, and accordingly I made it. Other matters, that only served for the meridian of this life, I used either barely for necessity of my present subsistence, or as a divertisement, and sparingly, or in order to those great ends. Those were the business, these only the *parerga** of my life.

X.

TOUCHING THY CREATURES, AND THE USE OF THEM, AND THE DOMINION OVER THEM.

I have esteemed them as thine in propriety. Thou hast committed unto me the use, and a

* Recreations.

subordinate dominion over them; yet I ever esteemed myself an accomptant to Thee for them; and therefore I have received them with thankfulness unto Thee, the great Lord both of them and me. When the earth yielded me a good crop of corn or other fruits, when flocks increased, when my honest labours brought me in a plentiful or convenient supply, I looked up to thee as the giver,—to thy providence and blessings, as the original of all my increase. I did not sacrifice to my own net, or industry, or prudence; but I received all, as the gracious and bountiful returns of thy liberal hand. I looked upon every grain of corn that I sowed, as buried and lost, unless thy power quickened and revived it. I esteemed the best production would have been but stalk and straw, unless thou hadst increased it. I esteemed my own hand and industry but impotent, unless thou hadst blessed it; for it is thy blessing that maketh rich, and it is thou that givest power to get wealth *.

2. I esteemed it my duty to make a return of this my acknowledgment, by giving the

* Prov. x. 22. Deut. viii. 18.

tribute of my increase, in the maintenance of thy ministers, and the relief of the poor: and I esteemed the practice enjoined to thy ancient people, of giving the tenth of their increase, a sufficient, not only warrant, but instruction to me under the gospel, to do the like.

3. I have not only looked upon thy blessings and bounty, in lending me thine own creatures for my use; but I have sought unto Thee for a blessing upon them, in my use of them. I did very well observe, that there is by my sin a curse in the very creatures that I receive, unless thy blessing fetch it out; an emptiness in them, unless thy goodness fill them: though thou shouldst give me quails and manna from heaven, yet without thy blessing upon them, they would become rottenness and putrefaction to me. And therefore I ever begged thy blessing upon thy blessings, as well as the blessings themselves; and attributed the good I found, or was to expect in them, to the same hand that gave them.

4. I received and used thy creatures, as committed to me under a trust, and as a steward and accomptant for them; and, therefore, I was always careful to use them according

to those limits, and in order for those ends, for which thou didst commit them to me.—1. With temperance and moderation. I did not use thy creatures to luxury and excess, to make provision for my lusts, with vain glory or ostentation; but for the convenient support of the exigencies of my nature and condition: and if at any time thy goodness did indulge me an use of them for delight, as well as necessity, I did it but rarely and watchfully. I looked not upon the wine, when it gave its colour in the cup; nor gave myself over, either to excess or curiosity in meats and drinks: I checked myself therein, as being in thy presence; and still remembered I had thy creatures under an accompt; and was ever careful to avoid excess or intemperance, because every excessive cup or meal was in danger to leave me somewhat in *super** and arrear to my Lord.—2. With mercy and compassion to the creatures themselves, which thou hast put under my power and disposal. When I considered the admirable powers of life and sense, which I saw in the birds and beasts; and that all

* Excess

the men in the world could not give the like being to any thing, nor restore that life and sense which is once taken from them; when I considered how innocently and harmlessly the fowls and the fish, and the sheep and oxen take their food, that thou the Lord of all hast given them; I have been apt to think, that surely thou didst intend a more innocent kind of food to man, than such as must be taken with such detriment to those living parts of thy creation: and although thy wonderful goodness hath so much indulged to mankind, as to give up the lives of these creatures for the food of man, by thy express commission, yet I still do, and ever did think that there was a *justice* due from man, even to these sensible creatures, that he should take them sparingly, for necessity, and not for delight; or if for delight, yet not for luxury. I have been apt to think, that if there were any more liberal use of creatures for delight and variety, it should be of fruits, or such other delicacies as might be had without the loss of life; but however it be, this very consideration hath made me very sparing and careful, not vainly, or super-

fluously, or unnecessarily, or prodigally, to take away the life of thy creatures for feasting and excess. And the very same consideration hath always gone along with me, in reference to the *labours* of his creatures. I have ever thought that there was a certain degree of justice due from man to the creatures, as from man to man; and that an excessive, immoderate, unseasonable use of the creature's labour, is an injustice for which he must account. To deny domestical creatures their convenient food; to exact that labour from them, that they are not able to perform; to use extremity or cruelty towards them; is a breach of that trust under which the dominion of the creatures was committed to us, and a breach of that justice that is due from men to them. And therefore I have always esteemed it as a part of my duty, and it hath been always my practice, to be merciful to beasts*. And upon the same account I have ever esteemed it a breach of trust, and have accordingly declined, any cruelty to any of thy creatures; and as much

* Prov. xii. 10.

as I might, prevented it in others; as a tyranny, inconsistent with the trust and stewardship that thou hast committed to me. I have abhorred those sports that consist in the torturing of the creatures: and if either noxious creatures must be destroyed, or creatures for food must be taken, it hath been my practice to do it in that manner, that may be with the least torture or cruelty to the creature. And I have still thought it an unlawful thing to destroy those creatures for recreation's sake, that either were not hurtful when they lived, or are not profitable when they are killed; ever remembering, that thou hast given us a dominion over thy creatures; yet it is under a law of justice, prudence, and moderation, otherwise we should become tyrants, not lords, over thy creatures: and therefore those things of this nature, that others have practised as recreations, I have avoided as sins.

As to those Habits of Mind, and knowledge that I have had or acquired; and namely,

XI.

MY LEARNING OF NATURAL CAUSES AND EFFECTS, AND OF ARTS AND SCIENCES:

I have not esteemed them the chiefest or best furniture of my mind: but have accounted them but dross in comparison of the knowledge of Thee, and thy Christ, and Him crucified. In the acquiring of them I have always observed this care:—1. That I might not too prodigally bestow my time upon them, to the prejudice of that time and pains for the acquiring of more excellent knowledge, and the greater concernments of my everlasting happiness.

2. I carried along with me, in all my studies of this nature, this great design of improving them, and the knowledge acquired by them to the honour of thy name, and the greater discovery of thy wisdom, power, and truth; and so translated my secular learning into an improvement of divine knowledge. And had I not had, and practised that design in my acquests of human learning, I had concluded my time mispent; because I ever thought it unworthy of a man that had an

everlasting soul, to furnish it only with such learning, as either would die with his body, and so become unuseful for his everlasting state, or that in the next moment after death, would be attained without labour or toil in this life. Yet this advantage I made and found in my application to secular studies:—

It enlarged and habituated my mind for more useful inquiries.

It carried me up, in a great measure, to the sound and grounded knowledge of Thee, the first cause of all things.

It kept me from idleness and rust.

It kept my thoughts, and life oftentimes, from temptations to worse employments.

My learning and knowledge did not heighten my opinion of myself, parts or abilities; but the more I knew, the more humble I was.

I found it was thy strength and blessing that enabled me to it; that gave me understanding and enlarged it. I did look upon it as a talent lent me, not truly acquired by me.

The more I knew, the more I knew my own ignorance. I found myself convinced that there was an ignorance in what I thought

I knew; my knowledge was but imperfect, and defective; and I found an infinite latitude of things which I knew not: the farther I waded into knowledge, the deeper still I found it; and it was with me, just as it is with a child that thinks, that if he could but come to such a field, he should be able to touch the hemisphere of the heavens; but when he comes thither, he finds it as far off as it was before. Thus, while my mind pursued knowledge, I found the object still as far before me as it was, if not much farther; and could no more attain the full and exact knowledge of any one subject, than the hinder wheel of a chariot can overtake the former: though I knew much of what others were ignorant, yet still I found there was much more, whereof I was ignorant, than what I knew; even in the compass of a most confined and inconsiderable subject. And as my very knowledge taught me humility, in the sense of my own ignorance; so it taught me that my understanding was of finite and limited power, that takes in things by little and little, and gradually;—That thy wisdom is unsearchable and past

finding out; — That thy works, which are but finite in themselves, and necessarily short of that infinite wisdom by which they are contrived, are yet so wonderful, that as the wise man saith, "No man can find out the work that thou makest, from the beginning to the end*." If a man would spend his whole life in the study of a poor fly, there would be such a confluence of so many wonderful and difficult exhibits in it, that it would still leave much more undiscovered than the most singular wit ever yet attained.

It taught me also, with the wise man, to write vanity and vexation upon all my secular knowledge and learning†. That little that I knew, was not attained without much labour, nor yet free from much uncertainty; and the great residuum which I knew not, rendered that I knew poor, and inconsiderable: and therefore,—

I did most evidently conclude, that the happiness and perfection of my intellectual power was not to be found in this kind of knowledge; in a knowledge thus sensibly

* Eccles. iii. 11. † Eccles. i. 14.

mingled with ignorance, in the things it seems to know; mingled with a dissatisfaction, in respect of the things I know not; mingled with a difficulty in attaining, and restlessness when attained. The more I knew, the more I knew that I knew not; and the more I knew, the more impatient my mind was to know what it knew not. My knowledge did rather enlarge my desire of knowing than satisfy it; and the most intemperate sensual appetite under heaven was more capable of satisfaction by what it enjoyed, than my intellectual appetite or desire was or could be satisfied with the things I knew: but the enlarging of my understanding with knowledge did but enlarge and amplify the desire and appetite I had to know; so that what *Job*'s return was upon his inquisition after wisdom: "The depth saith, It is not in me; and the sea saith, It is not in me*;" the same account all my several boxes or kinds of knowledge gave me, when I inquired for satisfaction in them. My abstract and choice speculations in the Metaphysics were of that abstract and comprehen-

* Job, xxviii. 14.

sive nature, that when I had perused great volumes of it, and intended* my mind close to it, yet it was so mercurial, that I could hardly hold it; and yet so extensive and endless, that the more I read or thought of it, the more I might. — Natural Philosophy (though it were more tractable, because holding a greater vicinity to sense and experiment, yet) I found full of uncertainty; much of it grounded upon imaginary suppositions, impossible to be experimented; the latter philosophers censuring the former, and departing from them, and the latest despising and rejecting both; the subject as vast as the visible or tangible universe, and yet every individual so complicated, that if all the rest were omitted, any one had more lines concentered in it, than were possible for any one age to sift to the bottom; yet any one lost, or not exactly scanned, leaves all the rest uncertain and conjectural: the very disquisition concerning any one part of the brain, the eye, the nerves, the blood, hath perplexed the most exact scrutators. — Those more dry, yet more demonstrable conclusions in the Mathematics,

* Applied.

yet they are endless and perplexed. The proportion of lines to lines, of superficies to superficies, bodies to bodies, numbers to numbers;—nay, to leave the whole latitude of the subject, see what long, and intricate, and unsatisfactory pains men have taken about some one particular subject, the quadrature of the circle, conical, oval, and spiral lines; and yet if it could be attained in the perfection of it, these three unhappinesses attend it.

1. That it is but of little use: it is only known that it may be known. That which is of ordinary use either in Architecture, Measuring of bodies and superficies, Mechanics, Business of Accounts, and the like, is soon attained, and by ordinary capacities: the rest are but curious impertinents, in respect of use and application.

2. That they serve only for the meridian of this life, and of corporal converse. A separated soul, or a spiritualized body, will not be concerned in the use and employment of them.

3. But admit they should; yet, doubtless, a greater measure of such knowledge will be attained in one hour after our dissolution, than the toilsome expense of an age in this life

would produce. And the like may be said for Astronomical disquisitions. What a deal to do there is, touching the motion or consistency of the sun or earth; the quality and habitableness of the moon; the matter, quantity, and distance of the stars; the several positions, continuity, contiguity, and motions of the heavens; the various influences of the heavenly bodies in their oppositions, conjunctions, aspects. When once the immortal soul hath flown through the stories of the heavens, in one moment all these will be known distinctly, clearly, and evidently, which here are nothing but conjectures and opinions, gained by long reading or observation.

Upon all these considerations I concluded, that my intellectual power, and the exercise of it in this life, was given me for a more sure and certain, useful, advantageous, suitable and becoming object, even "To know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent*."—A knowledge that is useful for the acquiring of happiness here and hereafter; a knowledge of a subject, though infinitely

* John, xvii. 3.

comprehensive, yet but one; a knowledge, that though it still move farther, yet it satisfies in what is acquired, and doth not disquiet in attaining more; a knowledge that is of such use in the world that is to come, as it is here; a knowledge that, the more it is improved in this life, the more it is improved in that which is to come; every grain of it here is enlarged to a vast proportion hereafter; a knowledge that is acquired, even with a consent, a desire to know, because thy goodness pleaseth to fill such a desire, to instruct from thyself, and there is none teacheth like thee.

XII.

CONCERNING HUMAN PRUDENCE, AND UNDERSTANDING IN AFFAIRS, AND DEXTERITY IN THE MANAGING OF THEM.

I have been always careful to mingle justice and honesty with my prudence; and have always esteemed prudence, acted by injustice and falsity, the arrantest and most devilish practice in the world; because it prostitutes thy gift to the service of Hell, and mingles a beam of thy Divine excellence with an extraction of the Devil's furnishing; making a man

so much the worse, by how much he is wiser than others. I always thought that wisdom, which in a tradesman, and in a politician, was mingled with deceit, falsity, and injustice, deserved the same name: only the latter is so much the worse, because it was of the more public and general concernment. Yet, because I have often observed great employments, especially in public affairs, are sometimes under great temptations of mingling too much craft with prudence, and then to miscall it policy: — I have, as much as may be, avoided such temptations; and if I have met with them, I have resolvedly rejected them.

I have always observed, that honesty and plain-dealing in transactions, as well public as private, is the best and soundest prudence and policy; and commonly at the long-run over-matcheth craft and subtlety*; for the deceived and deceiver are Thine; and thou art privy to the subtilty of the one, and the simplicity of the other; and Thou, the great moderator and observer of men, dost dispense success and disappointments accordingly.

As human prudence is abused, if mingled

* Job, xii. 16.

with falsity and deceit, though the end be ever so good; so it is much more embased, if directed to a bad end: to the dishonour of thy name, the oppression of thy people, the corrupting of thy worship or truth, or to execute any injustice towards any person. It hath been my care, as not to err in the manner, so neither in the end of the exercising of thy providence. I have ever esteemed thy prudence then best employed, when it was exercised in the preservation and support of thy truth; in the upholding of thy faithful ministers; in countermining, discovering, and disappointing the designs of evil and treacherous men; in delivering the oppressed; in righting the injured; in prevention of wars and discords; in preserving the public peace and tranquillity of the people where I live; in faithful advising of my prince; and in all those offices incumbent upon me by thy providence, under every relation.

When my end was most unquestionably good, I ever then took most heed that the means were suitable and justifiable. — 1. Because the better the end was, the more easily we are cozened into the use of ill means to effect it; we are too apt to dispense with our-

selves in the practice of what is amiss, in order to the accomplishing of an end that is good; we are apt, while with great intention of mind we gaze upon the end, not to care what course we take, so as we attain it; and are apt to think that God will dispense with, or at least overlook the miscarriage in our attempts, if the end be good.—2. Because many times, if not most times, Thy name and honour do more suffer, by attempting a good end by bad means, than by attempting both a bad end, and also by bad means. For bad ends are suitable to bad means; they are alike: and it doth not immediately, as such, concern thy honour. But every thing that is good, hath somewhat of thee in it: thy name, and thy nature, and thy honour is written upon it; and the blemish that is cast upon it, is in some measure cast upon thee; and the evil and scandal, and infamy, and ugliness that is in the means, is cast upon the end, and doth disparage and blemish it; and consequently it dishonours Thee. To rob for burnt-offerings, and to lie for God, is a greater disservice to Thy majesty, than to rob for rapine, or to lie for advantage.

Whensoever my prudence was successful,

duly to attain a good end, I ever gave Thy name the glory, and that in sincerity. I have known some men (and if a man will observe his own heart, he will find it there also, unless it be strictly denied) that will give God the glory of the success of a good enterprize, but yet with a kind of secret invitation of somewhat of praise for themselves, their prudence, conduct, and wisdom; and will be glad to hear of it, and secretly angry and discontented if they miss it; and many times give God the glory, with a kind of ostentation and vainglory in doing so: but I have given Thee the glory of it upon the account of my very judgment, that it is due, and due only to Thee. I do know that that prudence that I have, comes from Thee: and I do know, that it is thy providential ordering of occurrences that makes prudential deliberations successful; and more is due unto thy ordering, disposing, fitting, timing, directing of all in seeming casualties, than there is to that human counsel by which it is acted, or seems to be acted: the least whereof, if not marshalled by Thy hand, would have shattered and broken the counsel to a thousand pieces. Thou givest the advice by

thy wisdom, and secondest it by Thy providence. Thou dealest by us as we do by our children, when we set them to lift up a heavy staff, or a weight, and we lift with them: and we again are too like those children, that think we move the weight, when we move not a grain of it.

XIII.

CONCERNING THE GIFT OF ELOCUTION.

I have ever used that gift with Humility; not thereby seeking applause to myself, or owning it: because pride and ostentation, in this gift, would be secret idolatry to myself, and sacrilege to Thee; robbing thee of thy glory, and therefore signally vindicated in the example of *Herod**.

2. With Truth: — I never used the advantage of my Elocution either to maintain a falsehood, or to abuse credulity into a foolish opinion or persuasion.

3. With Integrity: — I never used the advantage of Eloquence or Rhetoric to deceive people, or to cozen them into any thing. My

* Acts, xii.

heart always went along with my tongue; and if I used intention* of speech upon any occasion, it was upon an intention* of conviction in myself, of the truth, necessity, usefulness, and fitness of what I so persuaded. If my judgment was doubtful or uncertain, so was my speech. I never used elocution, or specious arguments, to invite any to that which in my own judgment I doubted, or doubted whether it were fit or seasonable, all circumstances considered. I never used my elocution to give credit to an ill cause; to justify that which deserved blame; to justify the wicked, or to condemn the righteous; to make any thing appear more specious or enormous than it deserved. I never thought my profession should either necessitate a man to use his eloquence by extenuations, or aggravations, to make any thing worse or better than it deserves, or could justify a man in it: to prostitute my elocution or rhetoric in such a way, I ever held to be most basely mercenary; and that it was below the worth of a man, much more of a Christian, so to do. When the case was good, and fully

* Intenseness, earnestness.

so appeared to me, I thought then was that season that the use of that ability was my duty; and that it was given me for such a time as that; and I spared not the best of my ability in such a season: and indeed elocution or rhetoric is a dead and insipid piece, unless it come from, and with a heart full of the sense and conviction of what the tongue expresseth; and then, and not till then, elocution hath its life and energy. I esteemed these cases best deserving my elocution, and in these I was warm and earnest:—the setting forth of thy glory, the asserting of thy truth, the detection and conviction of errors, the clearing of the innocent, the aggravating of sins, oppressions, and deceits: and though I was careful that I did not exceed the bounds of truth, or due moderation, yet I ever thought that these were the seasons for which that talent was given me, and accordingly I employed it.

XIV.

TOUCHING MY BODY, AND BODILY ENDOWMENTS OF HEALTH, STRENGTH, AND BEAUTY.

1. In general:—I looked upon my Body

but as an instrument, the *vehiculum animæ**; and not so much given for its own sake, as to be an engine for the exercise of my soul, and a cottage, wherein it might inhabit and perfect itself. And upon that reason, I was very careful to keep it useful for that end; and that as on the one side, by over-much severity or tyranny over it, I might not tire it; so, on the other side, by over-much pampering or pleasing it, I might not make it unruly and masterless; though I held the latter far more dangerous: For,

2. I considered and found, that my body was the harbour of the most dangerous temptations, and the receptacle of the most dangerous enemies to my soul. The greatest, and most intimate, and most assiduous temptations, for the most part, made their applications to my body, and held correspondence with the lusts and inclinations of my flesh and blood. The wine, when it gave its colour in the cup, and the pleasantness of it; variety and curiosity of meats; beautiful and fleshly allurements; costly and excessive apparel; precedence and

* Vehicle of the soul.

honour; wealth and power; the purveyor of all provisions convenient for the sufficing of fleshly desires; opportunities of revenging; sense of injuries; ease, idleness, and delicacy; —these, and a thousand more, made their applications and addresses to my sensual and corporal appetite, the motions of my blood, the constitution or complexion of my body, the lusts and desires of my flesh; or rather this lust reached and hunted after them; whereby my body, which was given to be instrumental and subservient unto my soul, was ready still to cast off the yoke, and set up for itself, and prostitute that noble part to be a servant, a bawd unto it; and bring her to that servitude and vassalage, that all her wit, skill, activity, and power, was wholly taken up in contriving and making provisions for the flesh. I found that the sensual and beastly part, was ready still to thrust the heavenly and intellectual part out of her throne, and to usurp it, and to invert the very order of nature itself; so that both the parts of my composition were disordered, and out of their place, and lost their use. My body, which was given to serve and obey, became the empress, and commanded

and corrupted my soul, embased and enslaved it to lust and disorder; and my soul, which was given to rule, became but the minister and slave of my body; and was tainted and emasculated by the empire and dominion of my body, and the lusts and steams of concupiscence that did arise from it: and I considered, that if the business was thus carried, my happiness was only in this life. When sickness, or diseases, or death should seize upon my body, I had an immortal soul, that had lost her time wholly in this world; and not only so, but was embased and putrified by these noisome lusts; and that the very contagion of my body was incorporated and diffused through my soul; and could carry nothing with her but immortality and disappointment, and defilement; and consequently could expect, to all eternity, nothing but vexation and dissatisfaction, and everlasting confusion. Upon all these considerations, I resolved and practised severity over this unruly beast, brought my body into subjection, refused to gratify her intemperate desires, denied them, kept them in awe and under discipline; and because I found that my fleshly lusts grew

petulant, imperious, and unruly, by variety, curiosity, and plenty of meats, drinks, and by ease and idleness, I subdued them by moderate diet and temperance, by hard labour and diligence, till I had reduced my body to that state and order that became it; that it might be in subjection, and not in dominion; might serve, and not rule. I denied satisfaction to an intemperate appetite, a wanton eye, a vain wish, a worldly desire. My table was sparing to myself, my clothes plain, my retinue and attendance but necessary. I chased away my lusts with the contemplations of the presence of God, the end of Christ's sufferings, the certainty, yet uncertainty of death, the state after death; and mingled all my enjoyments and desires with these serious and cleansing considerations: and I peremptorily refused to gratify the cravings of an importunate, inordinate, sensual appetite; and did resolutely let them know, they should not, might not, expect any better dealing from me; and my practice was accordingly.

3. I found by evident experience, that it is the greatest difficulty that can be, for a man in a good condition to give himself leave to

think it may be otherwise. There is a vanity that accompanies Health, that we can scarce persuade ourselves that we shall ever be sick or die: we cannot put another estimate of our condition than we do at present enjoy, especially if it be pleasing and delightful. To wean myself from this impotency of mind, although it hath pleased Thee to give me a strong and healthy constitution, yet I often put myself into the imagination and supposition of sickness; thought of my mortality; abstracted myself from my present condition of life and health; and pre-apprehended sickness, diseases, old age, infirmity, and death: and by this means broke and scattered my confidence of long life, continued health; and took up thoughts becoming a sick, infirm, or dying man; considered how my accounts stood, if God should please to call me away; how I could alienate my mind from the world; what patience I had to bear pain, and weakness, and sickness. In my most entire and firmest health, it was my care so to order my life and actions, as if the next hour might despoil me of my life and health too. I did not, durst not, allow myself in any considerate practice of any known sin;

in procrastination of my repentance; in a toleration of passions; upon a supposition of a continuance of life, or of an unshaken health: —but still cast with myself, Would I do thus, were the firmness of my health, or the thread of my life, to be broken off the next hour? My firm and strong constitution made me neither proud nor presumptuous: but the frequent interpositions of the thoughts of my change kept me humble, and watchful.

4. In reference to my health, I always avoided these two extremes: — 1. I never made it my idol: I declined not the due employment of my body in the works of charity, or necessity, or my ordinary calling, out of a vain fear of injuring my health; for I reckoned my health given me in order to these employments: and as he is over-curious, that will not put on his clothes for fear of wearing them out, or use his axe in his proper employment, for fear of hurting it, so he gives but an ill account of a healthy body, that dares not employ it in an employment proper for him, for fear of hurting his health. — 2. I was never vainly prodigal of it, but careful in a due manner to preserve it: I would decline places of infection, if I had no

necessary calling that brought me to them; unnecessary journies; exposing my body *gratis* to unnecessary dangers, especially intemperance in eating and drinking.

5. I esteemed Strength, and Beauty, and Comeliness of body, Thy blessing; an invitation to thankfulness. I esteemed it to carry with it a secret admonition, to bear a proportionable mind, and life, to a comely or beautiful body; and I looked upon a beautiful countenance, as a just reprehension of a deformed or ugly life or disposition: but I never found in it matter of pride, or vain-glory.—1. Because it is thy gift, and not my own acquisition.—2. Because a small matter quite spoils it: a fall, or a disease spoils the greatest strength: a humour in the face, a rheum in the eye, a palsy, or the small-pox, ruins the greatest beauty: or, if none of these happen, yet either old age, or death, turns all into weakness, deformity, or rottenness. I learn therefore in the enjoyments of these blessings, to enjoy them with humility and thankfulness; in the loss of them, to lose them with patience and contentedness; for I acknowledge thy hand both in the gift and in the loss. I looked

upon them as flowers of the spring; pleasing to the eye, but of short continuance: the casualty of an unruly wind, an unseasonable frost, a worm or fly might intercept their natural course of continuance; but they that escaped best, an autumn or winter will infallibly overtake and destroy them.

XV.

CONCERNING MY WEALTH AND TEMPORAL SUBSISTENCE.

I esteemed these acquisitions rather the effects of thy providence and blessing, than of my power or industry; for if instrumentally my industry acquired them, yet that very industry is thy gift: it is thou that givest me power to get wealth. Again, Though my industry and dexterity to get wealth, were never so great, yet a small interposition, either of thy providence or permission, might soon disappoint and frustrate all that dexterity or industry: a thief, or a storm, or a fire, or a leak, or the discomposure of the times, or a prodigal wife or son, or an unfaithful servant, or a long sickness, or a misfortune in others whom I trust, or a flaw in a title, or a word misinter-

preted, or a thousand other emergencies may, in a little space, ruin the product of many years' labour and care. When I have looked upon a spider, framing his web with a great deal of curiosity and care, and after his industry of many days, the maid with the broom, at one brush, spoils all; or when I have seen a republic of pismires, with great circumspection, choosing the seat of their residence, and every one carrying his egg and provisions to their common store-house, and the boy with a stick stirring it all abroad, or a hen or partridge scattering it all asunder, so that in a little moment, all the labour of those poor innocent creatures is disappointed;—it hath often put me in mind, how easily and suddenly the collection of many years may be dissipated: and the experience of these latter times gives sad and plentiful instances of it. But if none of all these visible emergencies happen, yet it is most plain, that without thy secret blessing upon honest and commendable industry, it proves unsuccessful to that end. I have known in my own observations, oftentimes two men, equally industrious, sober, watchful of opportunities, sparing, yet one gets up in the world,

the other goes backwards; and neither they, nor I, could possibly attribute it to any other cause but this,—thou didst bless the labour of the one, and blow upon the labour of the other. And upon all these considerations I learned, in the midst of all my affluence, not to sacrifice to my own net, nor to say in my heart, My might, and the power of my hands have gotten me this wealth; but I did remember the Lord my God, for it is He that gave me power to get wealth*.

I did not measure thy favour to me, or the goodness or safety of my own condition, by my wealth and plenty; for I found that those externals were either indifferently dispensed to the good and bad, or if there were any odds, the advantage of externals seemed to be to those, whose portion we might probably conjecture was only in this life. My wealth and plenty, therefore, rather made me the more jealous of my condition, than secure in it. It made me search and examine my condition the more strictly and carefully; and when upon the result, I found my sincerity and uprightness of

* Deut. viii. 17.

heart, though I with all thankfulness acknowledge thy goodness in giving me externals, yet I often begged of Thee that my portion might not be in this life only; that as thou gavest me wealth, so thou wouldst give and increase thy grace in my heart; that though I could wish the continuance of any external advantages as an opportunity to do the more good, yet if it were inconsistent with my everlasting interest, my great expectation in the life to come, I should choose to be without the former, rather than lose the latter; and I made it my choice rather to be poor here, and rich in the life to come, than to be rich here, and lost in the life to come.

And upon the same consideration, I judged myself never the better man, nor the better Christian, for having much of these worldly advantages. I looked upon them as external and adventitious advantages, that had no ingredience at all into my soul, unless possibly for the worse. I found a man might be rich, or honourable, in respect of his birth or place; and yet a fool, a glutton, luxurious, vain, imperious, covetous, proud, and in all probability the more obnoxious to these distempers by his

wealth or greatness: on the other side, a man might be poor, and wise, and learned, sober, humble; and possibly his poverty might, in reference to these virtuous habits, be an advantage. My riches and honour, therefore, never made me set one grain of value the more upon myself, than if I had been without them. I esteemed it as an instrument, that, being put into a wise, prudent, faithful, and liberal hand, might be of use; but gave no more value to that inherent worth of the man, than the axe or the saw gives skill to the carpenter.

I esteemed all the wealth and honour that I had, but intrusted to me by the Great Master of the Word; a talent which thou committedst to me as thy Steward, and upon account: and this consideration caused me to judge and esteem of my wealth, and dispense the same, quite in another way than is ordinarily done.

I did not esteem myself the richer at all for my multitude of riches. I esteemed no more given me, than what was in a reasonable manner proportionable to my necessities, to my charge and dependance, and to the station I had in the world; all the rest I looked upon as none of mine, but my Master's: it was rather

my burthen than my possession. The more I had, the more was my care, and the greater the charge that I had under my hands, and the more was my solicitude to be a faithful Steward of it, to the honour and use of my Master; but my part was the least that was in it: indeed I rejoiced in this, that my Master esteemed me wise and faithful, committing the dispensation thereof to my trust; but I thought it no more mine, than the lord's bailiff, or the merchant's cash-keeper, thinks his master's rents or money his.

And therefore I thought it would be a breach of my trust, to consume or embezzle that wealth in excessive superfluities of meat, drink, or apparel; or in advancing myself, or my posterity, to a massy or huge acquest.

But I employed that overplus in support of the ministry, in relief of the poor, in redemption of captives, in placing children to school and apprentice, in setting the poor on work: and, with submission to thy wisdom, I thought that this latter was an equal, if not a greater charity, than the encouragement of idle or dissolute persons by liberal supplies; because it kept them in their way, that wisdom and pro-

vidence hath designed for the children of men.

And in those employments of men in their labours, I still held this course: — 1. To allow them competent wages. — 2. That the greatest expense should be rather in the labour than in the materials. — 3. That the nature of the work should be such as might bring me in a return of profit, rather than of curiosity; because the proceed might be a stock for farther charity or public advantage. — 4. But rather than the poor should want employment and subsistence, I thought it allowable to employ them in such labours as might yield them a lawful profit, though it yielded me only a lawful contentment; as in building, planting, and the like honest, though not altogether profitable employments: in all which, my principal design was the support of others; and my own contentation was only a concomitant of it; and I thought such an unprofitable contentment lawfully acquired, when it was attained by the honest labour and convenient profit of those that I employed. — 5. And by this consideration, I kept my heart from making my wealth, either my confidence or my treasures; I kept a

loose affection towards it. If I had it, I esteemed it as thy *depositum*, an increase of my account and care: if I lost it without my own folly or fault, I looked upon that loss as a discharge of so much of my accounts and charge;—I had the less to answer for.

I esteemed my wealth,—1. As uncertain to continue with me; for it hath its wings, and might take its flight, when I little thought of it.—2. As that which I must leave when I die.—3. As not useful, after death, for any purpose whatsoever unto me.—4. As that which makes me obnoxious to envy and rapine, while I live.—5. As unuseful at all, but when it is going away, viz. in the expense* of it.—6. As a great temptation to pride, vanity, insolence, and luxury.—And upon all these, and many more considerations, I ever thought it too low to set my heart upon it, and too weak to place my confidence in it. When I had it, therefore, I received it thankfully, used it soberly and faithfully: when I lost it, I lost it patiently and contentedly.

Inasmuch as my wealth, *in specie*, must be

* Expenditure.

left when I die, and I could not possibly carry that luggage into the other world, and if I could, it would not be of use there, I endeavoured so to order and husband it, that I might receive it, though not in kind, yet by way of exchange after death*. And because I found in thy word, 'That he that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord†;' and, 'He that giveth to a prophet but a cup of cold water in the name of a prophet, should receive a prophet's reward‡;' I have taken that course so to dispose this unrighteous mammon here, that I might make the God of Heaven my debtor, not by merit, but by promise: and so I have made over that great wealth that thou didst send me, unto the other world. And blessed be thy condescension to thy creatures, that when thou makest us thy debtors and accountants in this world, by thy talent of all kinds that thou deliverest us, thou art pleased, upon the performance of our duty in that trust, to make thyself a debtor to thy creature, by a promise of an everlasting reward.

* Luke, xii. 33. Matth. vi. 20. 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19.
† Prov. xix. 17. ‡ Matth. x. 41.

XVI.

TOUCHING MY EMINENCE OF PLACE OR POWER IN THIS WORLD, THIS IS MY ACCOUNT.

I never sought or desired it; and that upon these reasons:—1. Because I easily saw, that it was rather a burthen than a privilege: it made my charge and my accounts the greater; my contentment and rest the less. I found enough in it, to make me decline it in respect of myself; but not any thing that could invite me to seek or desire it.—2. That external glory and splendour that attended it, I esteemed as vain and frivolous in itself; a bait to allure vain and inconsiderate persons to affect and delight; not valuable enough to invite a considerate judgment to desire or undertake it. I esteemed them as the gilt that covers a bitter pill; and I looked through this dress and outside, and easily saw, that it covered a state obnoxious to danger, solicitude, care, trouble, envy, discontent, unquietness, temptation, and vexation. I esteemed it a condition which, if there were any distemper abroad, they would infallibly be hunting and pushing at it; and if it found any corruptions within, either of pride,

vain-glory, insolence, vindictiveness, or the like, it would be sure to draw them out and set them to work; which if they prevailed, it made my power and greatness not only my burthen, but my sin: if they prevailed not, yet it required a most watchful, assiduous, and severe, vigilant labour and industry to suppress them.

When I *undertook* any place of power or eminence, 1. I looked to my call thereunto, to be such as I might discern to be thy call, not my own ambition. 2. That the place were such, as might be answered by suitable abilities in some measure to perform. 3. That my end in it might not be the satisfaction of any pride, ambition, or vanity in myself; but to serve thy providence, and my generation, honestly and faithfully. In all which, my undertaking was not an act of my choice, but of my duty.

In the holding or *exercising* of these places, I kept my heart humble: I valued not myself one rush the more for it. — 1. Because I easily found that that base affection of pride, which commonly is the fly that haunts such employments, would render me dishonourable to thy Majesty, and disserviceable in the employment.

—2. Because I easily saw great places were slippery places, the mark of envy. It was therefore always my care so to behave myself in it, as I might be in a capacity to leave; and so to leave it, as that when I had left it, I might have no scars and blemishes stick upon me. I carried therefore the same evenness of temper in holding it, as might become me if I were without it.—3. I found enough in great employment to make me sensible of the danger, troubles, and cares of it; enough to make me humble, but not enough to make me proud and haughty.

I never made use of my power or greatness to serve my own turns; either to heap up riches, or to oppress my neighbour, or to revenge injuries, or to uphold or bolster out injustice: for though others thought me great, I knew myself to be still the same. And in all things, besides the due execution of my place, my deportment was just the same, as if I had been no such man: for first, I knew that I was but thy steward and minister, and placed there to serve thee and those ends which thou proposedst in my preferment; and not to serve myself, much less my passions or corruptions.

And further, I very well and practically knew, that place, and honour, and preferment, are things extrinsical, and have no ingredience into the man: his value and estimate before, and under, and after his greatness, is still the same in itself, as the counter that now stands for a penny, anon for sixpence, anon for twelvepence, is still the same counter, though its place and extrinsical denomination be changed.

I improved the opportunity of my place, eminence, and greatness, to serve thee and my country in it, with all vigilance, diligence, and fidelity; — protected, countenanced, and encouraged thy worship, name, day, people. I did faithfully execute justice according to that station I had. I rescued the oppressed from the cruelty, malice, and insolence of their oppressors. I cleared the innocent from unjust calumnies and reproaches. I was instrumental to place those in offices, places, and employments of trust and consequence, that were honest and faithful. I removed those that were dishonest, irreligious, false, or unjust. I did discountenance, and as they justly fell under the verge of the law, I punished profane, turbulent, atheistical, licentious persons. My greatness

was a shelter to virtue and goodness, and a terror to vice and irreligion. I interposed to cool the ferocity and violence of others against good men, upon mistake, or slight and inconsiderable differences. In sum, I so used my place and greatness, and so carried myself in all things, as if all the while I had seen Thee, the great Master of all the families in heaven and earth, standing by me. I often consulted my instructions, Thy written Word, and the impartial answers of my Conscience; and I strictly pursued it: and when I found myself at any time at a loss, by reason of the difficulty and perplexity of emergencies, I did in an especial manner apply myself unto Thee for advice and direction.

XVII.

TOUCHING MY REPUTATION AND CREDIT.

I never affected the reputation of being rich, great, crafty, politic; but I esteemed much a deserved reputation of justice, honesty, integrity, virtue, and piety.

I never thought that reputation was the thing, primarily to be looked after in the exercise of virtue; for that were to affect the sub-

stance for the sake of the shadow, which had been a kind of levity and impotence of mind: but I looked at virtue, and the worth of it, as that which was the first desirable; and reputation as a handsome and useful accession to it.

The reputation of justice and honesty I was always careful to keep untainted, upon these grounds: — 1. Because a blemish in my reputation would be dishonourable to Thee. — 2. It would be an abuse of a talent which Thou hadst committed to me. — 3. It would be a weakening of an instrument which Thou hadst put into my hands, upon the strength whereof much good might be done by me.

I found both in myself and others, a good reputation had these two great advantages in it. — 1. In respect of the party that had it, it was a handsome incentive to virtue, and did strengthen the vigilance and care of them that had it, to preserve it. There is a certain honest worth and delight in it, that adds somewhat to the care and jealousy of good minds not rashly to lose it. The value and worth of virtue, though it far exceeds the value of that reputation that ariseth from it, yet it is more Platonic and spiritual, and hath not always

that impression upon us, as the sense of our reputation hath; and I always looked upon it as no small evidence of thy wisdom in governing men, in adding a kind of external splendor and glory to goodness and virtue, which might be, and is a means to preserve the other, as the shell or husk to preserve a kernel. — 2. In respect of others, because it is both an allurement to the practice of that virtue which attends, and also gives a man a fairer opportunity, and strength to exercise any worthy and good actions for the good of others. A man of a deserved reputation, hath oftentimes an opportunity to do that good which another wants; and may practise it with more security and success.

5. These temptations I always found *attending a fair reputation;* and I still watched and declined them as pests and cankers. — 1. Pride and vain-glory: I esteemed this as that which would spoil and deface, not only my soul, but even that very reputation which I had acquired. There is nothing sooner undoes reputation, than the pride and vain-glory that a man takes in it. — 2. Idleness and remissness: when a man begins to think that he hath such

a stock thereof, that he may now sit still; and with the rich man in the Gospel, please himself that he hath enough laid up for many years; and therefore he at once starves both his goodness and reputation. — 3. A daring to adventure upon some very ill action, upon a secret and deceitful confidence in his reputation; thinking now he hath acquired such a stock of reputation, that he may with secrecy, and safety, and success, adventure upon any thing, in confidence that his reputation will bear him out. — 4. A man of great reputation shall be sure, by those in power, to be put upon actions that may serve turn. This is the Devil's skill: for if he carry it out upon the strength of his reputation, the Devil makes the very result of virtue and worth the instrument of injustice and villany; but if he miscarry, the Devil hath got his end upon him, in that he hath blasted him, and wounded thy honour, which suffers in his disreputation. — 5. A great reputation, and the sense of it, and delight in it, is apt to put a man upon any shifts, though never so unhandsome, to support it.—6. It makes a man oftentimes over-timorous in doing that which is good and just, lest he should suffer in his

reputation with some party, whose concernment may lie in it.—7. It is apt to make a man impatient of any the least blemish that may be causelessly cast upon him, and to sink under it. A man of great reputation, and who sets his heart upon it, is desperately sensible of any thing that may wound it: Therefore,—

Though I have loved my reputation, and have been vigilant not to lose or impair it by my own default or neglect; yet I have looked upon it as a brittle thing; a thing that the Devil aims to hit in a special manner; a thing that is much in the power of a false report, a mistake, a misapprehension, to wound and hurt: notwithstanding all my care, I am at the mercy of others, without God's wonderful over-ruling providence. And as my reputation is the esteem that others have of me, so that esteem may be blemished without my default. I have therefore always taken this care, not to set my heart upon my reputation. I will use all fidelity and honesty, and take care it shall not be lost by any default of mine; and if, notwithstanding all this, my reputation be foiled by evil or envious men or angels, I will

patiently bear it, and content myself with the serenity of my own conscience: *Hic murus aheneus esto**.

When thy honour, or the good of my country was concerned, I then thought it was a seasonable time to lay out my reputation for the advantage of either, and to act it, and by, and upon it, to the highest, in the use of all lawful means; and upon such an occasion the counsel of Mordecai to Esther was my encouragement †. Who knoweth whether God hath given thee this reputation and esteem for such a time as this?

* "Be this thy brazen bulwark of defence,
Still to preserve thy conscious innocence,
Nor e'er turn pale with guilt."
HORACE, *Ep.* 1. — FRANCIS's *Translation.*

† Esther, v.

THE END.

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